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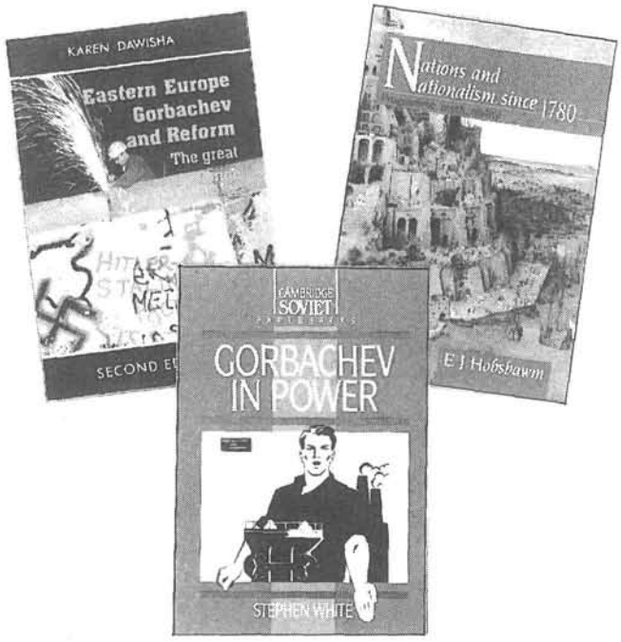

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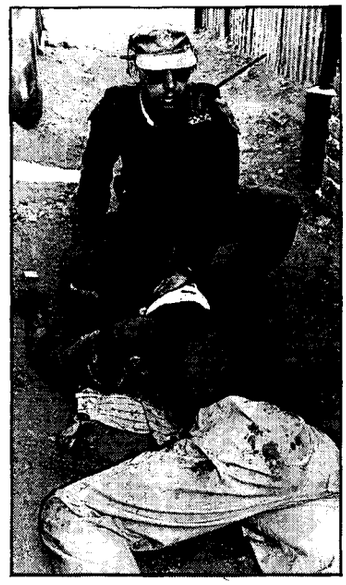

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EDITORIAL

Coming of Age

The west is celebrating the UN's coming of age in the Gulf crisis. But there are spectres at the feast

Ever since 6 August, the western media have been celebrating the coming of age of the United Nations. True, there have been a few anxious doubts about its new-found maturity since, but the vote to authorise the enforcement of the trade embargo against Iraq has resolved them; and the UN Secretary General, Perez de Cuellar, who was only a week ago dithering ineffectively in Latin America, suddenly stood revealed as a masterly diplomat who knew precisely when to intervene.

What that fine phrase "coming of age" actually means is that for once the rest of the world agrees with President Bush and Mrs Thatcher. This agreement is founded on the principle of self-determination: the notion (in Bush's own words) that "the acquisition of territory by force is unacceptable." For the moment, the defence of this principle coincides exactly with US interests in the Gulf. It may continue to do so. But it is clear that, if possible, the US means to go further than its UN mandate and forcibly remove the Iraqi dictator from power to secure its oil supplies on its own terms, not Iraq's, and to protect Israel's future.

Last week we warned against the dangers of such a course and argued for an even-handed approach to the Middle East. The test of the new world consensus around the principle of self-determination is as much the fate of the Israeli-occupied territories as it is of occupied Kuwait. Which means that Saddam Hussein's negotiating proposals are not as irrelevant as the White House, and the Foreign Office, would have us all believe; even if they, like the fate of the hostages, are not to be bargained directly against the restoration of Kuwaiti sovereignty.

Bush's European allies must therefore use all their influence to hold the US to the terms of the UN resolutions and to seek an outcome which satisfies the honour of Arab allies like Egypt and Syria (the Saudis plainly want war). Otherwise, the extraordinary coalition around the US's military initiative will collapse and it will come to be regarded as simply another imperialist adventure. And the United Nations will suffer a savage blow to its new-found credibility.

The danger for an international institution which, like the UN, seeks to balance geopolitical realities with some expression of world order and morality, is that on the one hand, it can be manipulated by the great powers to sanction wars in their interests, to make outlaws or monsters of their enemies, and to legitimise the defence of the status-quo; and on the other, that it can function merely as a talking shop, despised by the superpowers which create the global structures within which it operates.

The UN General Assembly has been as self-serving and hypocritical at times as the superpowers on its Security Council, and its bureaucracy slow and corrupt. But it has hardly deserved the arrogant contempt with which the US has regarded it since the 1950s—and has continued to show until very recently. The US has, for example, utterly refused to pay reparations to Nicaragua, as ordered by the World Court for its "unlawful use of force" in mining Nicaragua's harbours and has ignored resolutions from the Security Council and General Assembly calling on it to comply with the World Court ruling. (Violeta Chamorro has taken over from the Sandinistas the task of trying to collect the reparations from her sponsor.)

Nor has the US shown much respect in recent years for the principle of self-determination in other small nations like Cuba, Grenada or Panama (an invasion which the Security Council unavailingly condemned). T S Eliot wrote in *Murder in the Cathedral* that: "The last temptation is the greatest treason:/To do the right thing for the wrong reason." It was right to organise a collective response under UN auspices against the Iraqi takeover of Kuwait. It is a response which was initially made possible by Gorbachev's great speech to the UN in December 1988, renouncing the "missionary" rivalry between the two superpowers and opening up a vision of a new order founded on respect for the UN.

President Reagan didn't reply to Gorbachev's vision. Nor has his successor. But in the US there is a sense of having demonstrated once again that America is the superpower which really counts when the chips are down. This self-image is complemented by a complacent sense of Soviet weakness rather than Gorbachev's self-interested good sense. Both are apparent in the Soviet role during the Gulf crisis. But if Bush is allowed to use the UN as a club only against Iraq, and the US then reverts to the contemptuous indifference it has shown towards UN resolutions in the very recent past, then a glorious opportunity will be lost. Far from coming of age, the UN will be dead as a dodo.

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Good for whom?

Corruption, Guinness-style, is an inextricable part of much of the activity in the Square Mile and always has been. And it is an activity that is nearly unmanageably diffuse. Take the simplest sort of situation: Company A is planning a takeover bid for Company B. When this becomes public knowledge the shares in B will rise in value. You can therefore make money if you know or are told about the takeover by an insider, and buy shares in B before anyone else knows. It is like knowing which horse is going to win a race because it has been fixed in advance.

Regulation is almost impossibly difficult, because what is at issue is not what people do, but how they gained the knowledge that made them do it. How do you police a whisper in a City wine bar, a wink at the golf clubhouse? The temptations are enormous, the environment is murky and, what is more, exclusive. But to be an insider dealer, you have to be an insider. The US Securities and Exchange Commission—now the model for well-meaning attempts to regulate the City—was able to tip off the British authorities precisely because their nark, Ivan Boesky, egregiously failed to observe the self-serving rules of the insider game.

The government claims that the Guinness affair could not happen again under the tighter regime of the Financial Services Act. But even the new regulatory machinery is not likely to achieve much, given the power of the City lobby over legislation and the softly-softly ethic of such enforcement agencies in this country. If we are going to import the SEC, then we should import a few of its American lawyers to run it (the precedent is Mrs Thatcher's appointment of MacGregor at the NCB). But first we should ask some basic questions about how the City works. Since democracy in Britain has to work with the City, it is about time to make the City safe for democracy.

Driving dangerously

One of the great gains for women in postwar Britain has been the mobility the motor car has brought. But the brutal double rape of the woman motorist on the M20 last week has shown once again that while driving is safe, stopping isn't. The police view, that a woman is in more danger of being killed in a crash if she sits tight in a locked car on the hard shoulder, than she is of being raped sitting near her car, may be statistically valid. But it's not going to prevent the fears that increasingly now make women reluctant to drive at night or on the motorway.

A survey by the *Leeds Other Paper*, of over 200 women in West Yorkshire, prompted by the horrific murder of a pregnant woman, Marie Wilks, on the M50 in 1988, showed that male aggression towards women on the road actually begins before they stop driving. Every woman reported harassment from male drivers, ranging from obscene gestures and remarks to dangerous gambits like overtaking and then breaking suddenly, and even trying to force them off the road. The women rarely complain—their experience is that the police, employers, etc, "aren't interested".

As ever, women drivers are receiving well-meant, contradictory advice from the police and motoring organisations. It does little to alleviate fear or stop women feeling prisoners in their own cars. It would make a change if the authorities also addressed men and publicly raised the need to re-educate male drivers who see their car as a toy or weapon. Male motorists could police themselves and report aggressive driving too. In other words, men ought to take violence and rape on the roads as seriously as women already do—and act on it. This is everyone's problem.

Beirut to Belfast

When ex-hostage Brian Keenan leaves hospital, the Irish world he rediscovers may not look all that strange. It might even seem familiar to his Islamic Dawn jailers in Lebanon. They released what they took to be a simple Irishman on orders from the Hezbollah command, itself under pressure from Iran. It now transpires that he belongs to the Protestant tribe in the north of his war-ravaged country. The dominant tribal faction, or Unionists, who support military occupation by a powerful neighbour state, object to his getting a civic honour because he chose citizenship of the independent zone in the south. Keenan left Belfast asking "What's the difference between here and Beirut?". Five years on, he still awaits an answer.

The Dublin government clearly had much to gain by sending a delegation to Tehran to seek his liberation. But why did the Iranians start pulling so promptly on the chain of influence that led to Keenan and John McCarthy's Beirut basement? First, to test the water of international reaction now that Iraq's aggression has pushed the west into their arms. Second, to open doors in the European Community, whose presidency Ireland held until July, via a country not compromised, as Britain is, by military obedience to the US. It was a European parliamentarian, Niall Williams, who led the Irish mission.

The remaining western captives will prove even trickier to extract. President Rafsanjani knows how eager his new suitors could become, and may raise the price of his good offices. Conflict in the Gulf could tilt the kidnappers' allegiances towards the latest anti-American champion, Iraq. So fishing just one more hostage out will still resemble solving a Rubik cube puzzle in pitch dark. But the Irish managed it. Anyone for a thick Paddy joke?

Nobody's business

The Iraqis invaded Kuwait on day zero. The UN voted for sanctions on day four. The US sent in the troops on day six. And the west turned its attention to the refugee problem thus created on day 23.

For two weeks, Britons and Americans dressed up in native costume to carry out the death-or-glory dash into Saudi Arabia, arriving to make the prime-time news bulletins back home and to sing the praises of their Chevrolet gas-guzzlers. The refugees slowly making their way, in appalling conditions, across Iraq into Jordan, and those stranded in Kuwait, were more numerous, but less glamorous.

Only when Jordan, now public enemy number two, was forced by intolerable pressures to close its borders, did the money start to flow—and then only on a bilateral basis. The US has pledged $1m—about one dollar per refugee. One might ask: where was the United Nations High Commission for Refugees all this time? Its answer: keeping a watching brief, liaising, and consulting. The problem, the UNHCR points out, is that people fleeing *to* their countries are not refugees. It could only act if asked to take the lead by the UN. And it has barely enough money to fulfil its present commitments, let alone organise mass air-lifts.

These technicalities should not obscure the remarkable fact that a million displaced persons appear to be nobody's particular problem. Strange, isn't it, how concerted collective action can seem important one day, but not the next?

Saturday's *Guardian*: its reporter Martin Woollacott "listens to Arab views"—in particular, an "intelligent forceful Arab businesswoman", who states: "Saddam's character is about number 22 on my list of worries at this moment." Monday's *Guardian*: Ian Black reports from Amman, Jordan. He quotes a "middle-class woman": "Saddam's character is about number 22 on my list of priorities." Intelligent forceful Arab business women are evidently like British buses: none for days, then several all at once.

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POLITICAL COLUMN

Troops out?

The left's response to western intervention in the Gulf has been confused and uncertain

Sarah Baxter

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait has presented the British left with an awkward dilemma. Can western military intervention be justified on the grounds that Saddam Hussein is a genocidal tyrant? Or does US imperialism pose a greater threat to the Middle East than the annexation of a corrupt, oil-rich sheikhdom by a fellow Arab nation?

In the first few weeks of the crisis, socialists, deprived of the cold war as a familiar point of reference, have been unable to mount a united reponse. Neil Kinnock has been reluctant to press for the recall of parliament for fear of allowing Labour "appeasers" a voice, but the reality is that there is even less backbench opposition to the dispatch of western troops to Saudi Arabia than there was to the Falklands task force.

Some lone voices are beginning to make themselves heard. Tony Benn, who complains that his views have been shut out of the media, resorted to sending a letter to the *Times* and the *Guardian* last week, after bombarding the newspapers unsuccessfully with comments.

"I was not in favour of sending troops to the Gulf and I am not in favour," he states emphatically. "What we are being drawn into is a permanent US base in Saudi Arabia." He feels the public is being asked the wrong question: "If it's, 'Do you support Saddam Hussein?', well, obviously the answer is no, but if it's, 'Do you support an American attack on Iraq?', then I think I represent the majority view."

In between, however, are many different shades of opinion. Benn, for example, is a strong advocate of UN sanctions, but the same is not true of some of his allies. This week a new Campaign Against War in the Gulf has been launched, with Benn's support and that of Labour MPs Bernie Grant, Eric Heffer and Alice Mahon. Its aims are represented by the slogan, "US and British troops out of the Gulf; Iraqi troops out of Kuwait." In effect, this means, "Leave Kuwait to the Iraqis and let's hope the Arab states can sort something out," a position that is not likely to alarm Saddam Hussein. The campaign has chosen to sidestep the issue of sanctions: not all its supporters are convinced the UN, in its present guise of US "cheerleader", should be meddling in the Middle East. Instead, they argue that if Arab pressure proves incapable of forcing Saddam's troops out, then so be it: Kuwait's borders were the product of colonialism and the country has no god-given right to a permanent existence.

The problem for opponents of the western military build-up in Saudi Arabia is that they invariably sound like apologists for the Iraqi dictator. It is unfair, since the left has repeatedly criticised the west's arming of Iraq and was appalled by Saddam's chemical onslaught against his own Kurdish people. But prefacing comments with, "We don't support Saddam Hussein, but..." and "Iraq should get out of Kuwait, but..." cannot entirely succeed in dispelling this feeling.

Bernie Grant claims, somewhat optimistically in this case, that, "Nothing unites the left more than an anti-imperialist struggle against the USA." But Iraq's murderous regime is no substitute for the Sandinistas or Vietcong, as Grant concedes. Nor is his complaint that the west's fear of Iraq's potential nuclear capability is based on racism totally convincing. "Israel is a nuclear power and South Africa is a nuclear power," he says, "but because they're sort of 'white' countries, they're acceptable to the Americans. If people of colour have these weapons they think they'll be wild and irresponsible." But Saddam, surely, has already proved himself to be wild and irresponsible—by attacking Iran, gassing the Kurds and annexing a sovereign nation.

> *The problem for opponents of the western military build-up is they sound like Iraqi apologists*

Similarly, Grant is hoping to join Jesse Jackson in a further visit to Iraq, but he is not sure that he would use the opportunity to press for the release of British hostages. Iraq has the right to intern foreigners if war is declared, he argues, and firing shots across the bows of ships may count as an act of war under international law. This may be true, strictly speaking, but the comment could get him crucified by fellow backbenchers, some of whose constituents may be destined to form Saddam's "human shield".

The critical point dividing the left is whether the United States and Britain were justified in sending military forces to the Gulf in the first place. Tam Dalyell, a noted opponent of the Falklands War, is adamant that there had to be "a speedy response to defend Saudi Arabia". Ken Livingstone also believes "Given that no one else was geared up and ready to go, there's not much else that could have happened." These MPs have drawn their own line in the sand: the troops should operate in concert with the UN; sanctions should be given time to work; and there should be no assault on Iraq. Dalyell, for example, is alarmed that the British have sent out Tornado aircraft carrying powerful cluster bombs. "They will cause enormous casualties," he says. "Once blood is spilled on that scale, Saddam Hussein will become a martyr and it will become a North-South conflict against the Arab world."

The Labour Party Black Sections, in contrast, argue that this North-South conflict is already under way, thinly disguised by the support of "client" Arab and Asian states for President Bush's action. The dispute, the argument runs, is purely about cheap oil, but it is no accident that the left is utterly confused, because it lacks a coherent framework for understanding post-colonial and imperialist conflicts. Narendra Makanji, the Black Sections' international officer, says, "The left will always have problems with issues of imperialism, because it's been brought up to hail the Soviet Union." And a new left fashioned on "North-South" lines has yet to be created.

But Saddam Hussein's aggression hardly provides the ideal starting point for a new political axis. The best opportunity for the left to exert some influence and unity is not over the issue of an immediate troop withdrawal from the Gulf—that has already been shown to be hopelessly divisive. There is, however, an emerging consensus about the future direction of Middle Eastern policy. This includes opposing a permanent US presence in the Gulf; encouraging Kuwaiti self-determination (instead of restoring the discredited and undemocratic Emir); and insisting on the liberation of all annexed territories in the Middle East, including the West Bank and Gaza strip. Only by uniting around issues like these will the left have a chance to break from its isolation.

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TAKING LIBERTIES

Jolyon Jenkins

I quote from a recent law report:

"The deceased was visited [in a police cell] by his son, the applicant. The deceased was naked save for a paper towel saturated in urine, he was shaking, his hair was wet with sweat, his finger nails and lips were purple, he was mumbling incoherently and did not recognise the applicant. The applicant unsuccessfully tried to get the police to send the deceased to hospital. Some hours later the deceased was found lying unconscious on the floor. He was taken to University College Hospital where he died."

"The deceased" was Anthony Linnane, a 41-year-old, working-class Irishman. He was an epileptic and a chronic alcoholic, who frequently went shoplifting to raise money for drink. In October 1988 he was convicted of theft, and because of difficulties in the prison service was held in a police cell. Before he was sent there, he saw the duty doctor, who happened to be his own GP. He knew of Mr Linnane's epilepsy, and wrote on the examination form: "not to be given any sedatives." But at the station another doctor prescribed Largactil (a sedative) without reading the notes, and a third did the same. The next evening, Mr Linnane's son paid his distressing visit. A few hours later, Mr Linnane was dead.

At the inquest, the north London coroner refused to summon a jury, on the grounds that the death had happened in hospital rather than in police custody. Mr Linnane's family managed to get that decision overturned in the divisional court, and last June the inquest went ahead with a jury. Mr Linnane's family had commissioned a report by a Dr Jackson, who argued that the treatment Mr Linnane received might have contributed to his death, and that the death was partly caused by gross lack of care.

But the deputy coroner, Dr Ian Shedden, took an extraordinary decision. He refused to allow the jury to hear Dr Jackson's evidence. He said that he had just as much expertise himself, and that he could see no evidence that would justify a "lack of care" verdict. The jury obediently returned a verdict of death by natural causes.

The family returned to the divisional court. Last month the court gave its decision: Dr Shedden should not have barred Dr Jackson's evidence, and was wrong to prevent the jury returning a "lack of care" verdict. But the court refused to order a new inquest, since it was "several months" since the death. (The delay, it forbore to mention, was its own fault.)

Then again, who really cared about the death of a drunken Irishman? But that's not the only moral of the story. Most English courts operate according to an "adversary" system of justice: the truth is reached by barristers from the two sides fighting it out across the courtroom floor. By contrast, in Europe, an "inquisitorial" system is the norm: the judge takes an active part, and seeks to winkle out the truth by calling and examining witnesses. (Interestingly, Italy has just switched from an inquisitorial to an adversary system.) English coroners' courts are strangely anomalous inquisitorial relics.

Many people, including such distinguished commentators as Ludovic Kennedy, look at disasters like the Guildford Four case, and conclude that they would be less likely to occur under an inquisitorial system. Maybe. But anyone who thinks justice is guaranteed when a single judge runs the show should ask Anthony Linnane's family their opinion of the matter.

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DIARY

Sean French

To the best of my recollection (and see below for why this is not a phrase I am using lightly this week) the last time I wrote about Sunday newspapers was shortly before the launch of the *Sunday Independent* last year. I observed that the dummy edition was so impressive that the venture couldn't but be a major success.

An endorsement from me ought to have given pause to the *Independent*'s founder and editor, Andreas Whittam Smith, but he went ahead anyway. The paper was launched at the time it was in order to spoil the chances of the *Correspondent* and this it did to devastating effect. But it has been no less effective in spoiling its own daily paper.

Before launch, the *Independent* was a profitable venture whose shares were about to be floated, delivering large lump sums into the eager outstretched hands of its journalists. Now the company is losing money, expenses for all journalists have been slashed, the shares have fallen in value and the flotation has been repeatedly postponed. If you want to hear a journalist abuse the *Sindy* you don't need to seek out a *Correspondent* journalist; almost anyone on the daily *Independent* will do.

I try not to write too much about the world of journalism because I believe that it gets far more coverage in the media than it deserves. But the current Sunday battle is irresistibly surreal.

The proliferation of Sunday quality papers was meant to aid choice. The principal result is that the two carnivorous right-wing papers, the *Sunday Times* and the *Sunday Telegraph* are securely left alone while the three herbivorous liberal papers, the *Observer* (with which I am connected), the *Correspondent* and the *Sunday Independent* unprofitably fight it out to the death.

Most bizarrely the *Correspondent*, whose circulation is now at a terminal 150,000, is being kept alive by three famous investors, each of whom appears to be doing so largely in order to be able to get at the *Independent*. The *Guardian* provided crucial investment in order to sustain the paper that is bleeding its rival daily white, and it's difficult, even for a cynic like me, not to think that the money might have been more honourably spent in improving its own product.

The *Chicago Tribune* and Robert Maxwell are also keen to weaken the *Independent* (which also requires urgent investment) but in their cases it is because they want to lower the paper's resistance to their own predatory advances.

It's all very entertaining but, one has to ask, did the great print revolution really just occur so that major owners could squabble about increasing their already excessive degree of ownership?

An unfunny thing happened to me on the way from the *New Statesman* last week. A man in a parked car threw open his door as I rode past on my bike and neatly ripped the leg of one of my favourite pairs of trousers, not to mention its effect on one of my favourite legs.

During that strangely long and quiet time as I was flying towards the tarmac, I began to think of the unavoidability of such accidents. Unavoidable, I mean, from my point of view. For example, many car drivers believe that there is no point in indicating when about to turn left and that a rear-view mirror is something to be forgotten about once a driving licence has been obtained. If you repeatedly turn left in this way you will regularly collide with cyclists or at least force them off the road (a friend of a friend was killed by a lorry that made this manoeuvre).

All this is predictable enough. What is more surprising is the reaction of male drivers when they make these errors. Many men drive as if their car is psychically implanted on to their penis. Any admission of error is equivalent to public castration. In fact, judging by the recent tendency of TV programmes about sex, I suspect that many men would rather admit sexual impotence on television than acknowledge the smallest degree of motoring fallibility.

This tendency can only be fully appreciated when you are lying flat on your back beside your bike while the person who has knocked you down stands over you swearing.

By contrast with other tarmac traumas, my encounter in Kingsland Road was a delight. My injurer was not only a man but a mini-cab driver, and yet he admitted responsibility and apologised. I would have hugged him if I had been able to move.

It has come to my attention that someone out there has not only been reading what I write but also remembering it. Step forward, or perhaps I should say *approchez*, Bernadette Businelli from Ymaie in France.

In a letter to me she points out that I recently told the story of how I had been named, having already told the story in an earlier column in, as she puts it, "exactly the same terms". Well, it really happened so it would be likely to emerge more or less the same but that is hardly an excuse.

Having inserted the knife between my shoulder blades she proceeds elegantly to twist it by recalling that I had been writing about not having to write columns for the weeks that I was on holiday. "Much easier to rewrite and copy earlier ones!" she comments cheerfully. Yes, all right, *touché*, as you say in France.

It would have been bad enough if I had been caught out trying to get away with self-plagiarism in a desperate attempt to fill my space. What is far more dismaying is that it was entirely unintentional. Now that my number of *NSS* columns is into three figures, my brain has clearly started to dump earlier examples from my clogged-up memory. But like many refuse disposers, it couldn't be bothered to take the rubbish all the way to the appropriate tip. Instead it must have seen an empty space marked "new ideas" and left it there where it got picked up and re-used. Or something like that. At least it's ecologically, if not neurologically, sound.

Well, *nuls points pour* Sean French. *Merci, Bernadette, et au revoir*, as they say on the Eurovision Song Contest. I'll be more careful from now on.

Next week, an insider's view of the crazy world of the quality Sunday newspaper, a sideways look at the perils of bicycling in London, and an interesting, though slightly embarrassing, letter from a correspondent in France. And if there's space, I'll tell the rather amusing story of how I got my name.

ROGER WODDIS

Look who's talking

"This repulsive charade takes to new extremes the hypocrisy of Saddam Hussein and his callous disregard for human rights and individual feelings."—a Foreign Office spokesman on the Saddam TV spectacular

Oh, horror! What a ghastly show!
The man is evil, as we know,
But looking at his oily smile
(So typical of Arab guile),
One could not fail to apprehend
This rotter really is the end.
What cant! What shameless tommyrot!
It turns one's stomach, does it not?

We in the Foreign Office shrink
From propaganda ploys that stink,
And never turn off all the lights
Till we've secured all human rights.
One must make clear that one detests
His dubbing hostages as "guests".
(It's quite some time, when all is said,
Since we were patting Saddam's head.)

To fend off critics who attack,
The kettle calls the teapot black,
But who's to say, "What bloody cheek!"
Humbug is flavour of the week.
Our solemn duty is to hate
The murderers that we create:
As Frankenstein remarked, "Good God!
My monster's joined the awkward squad!"

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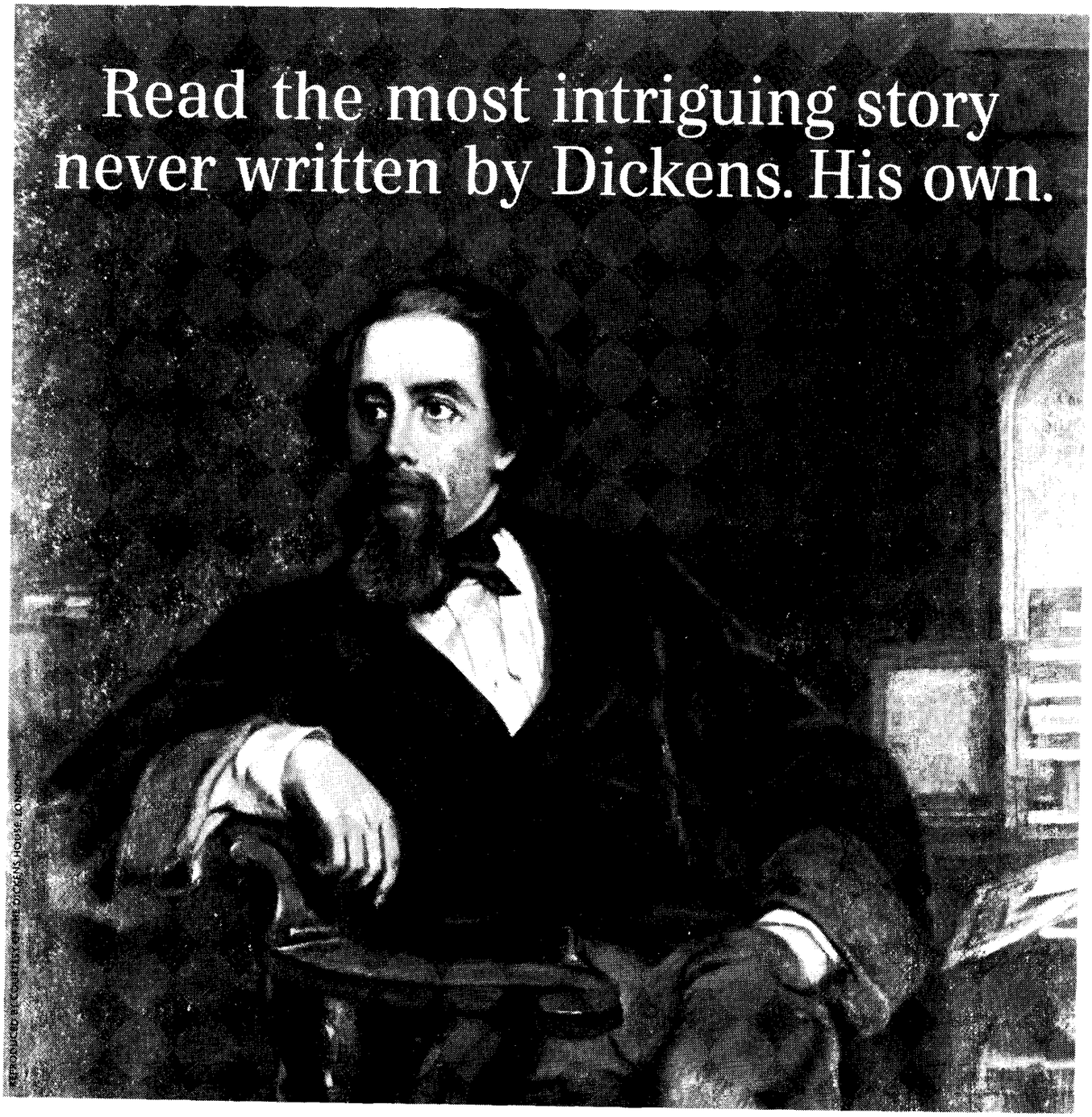

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In middle age, ever-conscious of death, Dickens became besotted with the young Ellen Ternan. What was to be her effect on the great writer during their mysterious affair?

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SOUTH AFRICA

Anatomy of fear

Are the terrible murders of the last week a sign that South Africa will become the new Lebanon, asks R W Johnson

Durban

The big question facing South Africa is whether the country will—as Cassandras have so long warned—turn into a sort of giant Lebanon, with warring communities tearing up all the normal rules of civil society and reducing the land to a series of no-go areas and contested zones. One of the oddest results of being in a situation like this is that people see events through a sort of passionate haze which enables them to "interpret" facts in line with whatever pre-existing reality they like.

Take the violence on the Reef, which has left several hundred dead and many more hundreds injured in what has, in effect, been a small war between Zulu hostel-dwellers and predominantly Xhosa supporters. The ANC's knee-jerk response has been to claim that the violence has been deliberately instigated by Chief Buthelezi, hand-in-glove with the security forces. There is, actually, no evidence at all for this conspiracy theory.

It is perfectly true that in the fighting in Natal the police have frequently sided with Buthelezi's Inkatha forces (though this was always less true of the army). It also seems

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Inkatha supporters wearing headbands blow the horn for battle in Soweto on 16 August

to be true that, at least in its initial stages, the Natal violence was actually stoked up by police officers acting on the old principle of divide-and-rule. And the UDF/ANC forces in Natal are able to cite innumerable cases where Inkatha forces have acted as the aggressor (though, to be fair, Inkatha has its own considerable list of just the opposite kind). But even the Natal violence cannot be explained simply as a conspiracy between Buthelezi and the police, let alone the fighting on the Reef—hundreds of miles outside the Inkatha heartland.

The contradictions in the ANC's position were on display at the first ANC meeting held in Soweto after the fighting, addressed by Winnie Mandela and Walter Sisulu. Mrs Mandela insisted that the fighting must not be seen as a form of ethnic or political conflict. Inkatha, she argued, "does not have the financial ability nor the manpower to mount a violence campaign and sustain it like it has been alleged they are doing". *Ergo*, it was all being done by the police and the government. She accused the police of killing township residents and then getting Inkatha members to stab the dead bodies to make it look as though they were merely part of township violence. Worse still, police in white Ford Sierras had been seen delivering suitcases full of arms to Inkatha-dominated hostels. The government, she alleged, was "working hand-in-hand with Inkatha", and de Klerk himself was behind the violence. Her husband, Nelson, she claimed, had told de Klerk that "he was the cause of the violence and that was why he could not stop it."

Mr Sisulu, who spoke after Mrs Mandela, took an opposite line. In his account there were no white Ford Sierras or policemen getting others to stab bodies for them (and there is no evidence for either charge). He seized on Mrs Mandela's remarks about Inkatha's lack of resources to say that therefore "Inkatha, as such, is not responsible for the fighting", although he hinted darkly that "people are dying to satisfy the ambitions of certain politicians." Far from accusing de Klerk of being "the cause" of the trouble, Sisulu "accused" him of "not being aware of the origin of the violence". Although he took a hard line against any suggestion of a Mandela-Buthelezi meeting, Sisulu insisted that the ANC was serious about saving lives and called on everyone to end the fighting without resorting to "childish talk".

This last remark may have been a reference to the fact that some groups of predominantly Xhosa/ANC local residents had been chanting "Kill the Zulus!" outside some of the "enemy" hostels. For the violence has, of course, been exactly the same sort of ethno-political conflict that so many African states witnessed on the last lap towards independence. Mrs Mandela's accusations against de Klerk were, of course, ludicrous. He has more to lose than almost anyone from the violence, which pushes more white votes towards Treurnicht on the extreme right and destabilises the negotiation process on which he, de Klerk, has risked everything.

The idea that the violence has been instigated by the police is only slightly less ludicrous (it *is* less so: the police record over the years has been appalling, and undisciplined right-wing elements exist within the police now). Despite the ANC's suspension of the armed struggle, township violence so far this year has seen 42 policemen killed and 403 injured. There have been 1,223 attacks on policemen, 522 attacks on their homes or families, and 1,805 police vehicles have been damaged or destroyed. Look at those figures; remember that the police are under strong pressure from de Klerk to behave, that they have to work (for low pay) under an intense international spotlight, and that the force is predominantly black. Then put yourself in their place and ask yourself how keen you would be to arrange things so that you had to interpose your body between crowds of furious Xhosa/ANC supporters and gangs of rampaging Zulus.

The accusation that the government and police are behind the violence comes naturally to the ANC, for these have been their natural enemies down the years. But it is extremely dangerous to fling such charges around now. In the eyes of the wilder township elements it is tantamount to saying that to kill the other side (Zulus) is to strike a blow against the hated apartheid state. The result can only be to increase the ethnic polarisation that these events have done much to strengthen. You notice this back here in Natal where the TV footage of events on the Reef is watched with horrified fascination by local Zulus.

For the first time I have found Africans telling me that they will ultimately vote for Buthelezi "because I am a Zulu" or "how can Mandela think he can rule the Zulus when he's only a Xhosa?" I was struck, too, that some of this rubs off even on the young Zulu "comrades", who are as strongly ANC as much of their age group seems to be everywhere. One such comrade I spoke to yesterday blamed all the violence on "that bad man Mangosutha (Buthelezi)" but agreed with me that the Zulus seem to have had by far the best of the fighting on the Reef. "Well, of course we win," he beamed, "we just are braver." One wonders at what point that "we", rather than his current loyalty to the ANC, becomes his fundamental identity. How would he feel if Zulu workers from the Reef started dribbling back to Natal telling brutal tales of how they had been forced out and their brothers butchered by (mere) Xhosas?

The worsening of the relationship between the ANC and Buthelezi comes at a time when the policy differences between them have been narrowed to almost nothing. Buthelezi has always demanded the release of Mandela and

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other political prisoners, the unbanning of the ANC and PAC, and universal suffrage in a unitary state. His differences with the ANC came over the armed struggle (which it has now ceased), over sanctions (which Mandela talks of dropping), over nationalisations of industry (on which the ANC now declares itself to have an open mind) and on respect for minority rights (on which Mandela has recently hinted at major concessions). But this very convergence merely points up the fact that the animosity between the two is rooted in rival and ethnically slanted nationalism.

Just six months on from its unbanning and re-entry into South African politics the ANC is now caught up in a situation very different from its millenarian dreams in exile. It has made much progress but only at the cost of concessions on every front. Despite decades of non-racial propaganda it finds itself engaged in a neo-tribal war. It has mass support but so little organisation that when the government gave it the names of 96 police officers across the country to whom it could have a hot-line to head off threatening local situations and asked for a list of 96 ANC counterparts, the ANC, weeks later, has only been able to come up with 29 names.

It is making much use of pictures of Nelson and Winnie in its propaganda, even though many of its own followers regard Winnie as a murderer. It can't get used to the idea that it now has easy access to government and keeps announcing mass actions to get things which the government would be happy to negotiate. It issued a ringing demand for a constituent assembly, but then quietly had to drop it when the major western embassies made it clear that they couldn't support it. Above all, it is full of slogans about "Forwards towards this", but in practice the ANC finds the

De Klerk has more to lose than almost anyone from the violence, which pushes more white votes towards Treurnicht

government is going far too fast for it and is desperately trying to slow down the pace—saying, for example, that it would like to put off negotiations on a new constitution until 1991.

The ANC is, in short, the hope and probably the future of the country, but is in a fair old mess. It now finds itself in the anomalous position where the government would like it to be stronger and better organised and is wondering about ways to help it become so.

A lot of this is understandable and forgivable in a movement that was illegal only six months ago. But unfortunately it lacks time. For one thing, the external position is beginning to unravel. African states are breaking the boycott to grant landing rights to South African Airways; South African trade with Europe has picked up sharply; a South African trade office has now opened in Budapest; east Germans are on holiday here; Pakistani pop stars jet in, oblivious of boycotts, as do Soviet academics; and so on. Quite clearly, there is already no road back to the old moral certainties of boycotts, sanctions and the like. And while the ANC may huff and puff about returning to the armed struggle if things go wrong, that already seems about as likely as a Zambian mission to Mars.

But time is lacking in a more fundamental sense. For the fighting on the Reef is only part of a far larger breakdown. This last week I found myself talking to one schoolteacher in Zululand who described how her pupils and their counterparts in the next valley had, in the last few months, killed 20 of their number. "It was so bizarre," she said. "There I was driving slowly along next to a jogging 14 year old with a pistol in each hand, pleading with him not to go and kill these other kids. But he wouldn't listen—after all, they'd spent a lot of money getting good *muti* (magic) from their *sangoma* (witch doctor)." The number of *sangomas* has, by the way, enormously increased—there are estimated to be 50,000-70,000 of them on the Reef.

Or again, I spent time with another woman active in setting up crèches in squatter camps. All her crèches have now been closed after young comrades came, drove her contacts out (burning their houses, etc), and then didn't know what to do with the crèches once they'd taken them over: a common tale of pure negation. And the children of negation are bitter. Try talking to youngsters who acted on the ANC slogan of the mid-1980s, "Liberation now, education later!" Instructed now by Mandela to go back to school, they find they can't get in, that they are unemployed for life. I think of them when I hear that car theft is increasing so fast that insurance premiums are doubling annually. What else can they do? And who is to blame?

Most significant of all is the fact that the agency set up by the government, with a brief to spend £400 million on township improvements, finds itself unable to spend its money because the townships are simply too troubled to operate in. Similarly, the construction firms and building societies lured into township building programmes by the government are now all pulling out with enormous losses. Everything they built got stolen and even razor wire and armed guards round every building site didn't help—indeed, some of the guards got killed. Such incidents raise the whole question of how amenable to treatment the situation now is.

The most alarming fact of all is that nothing breeds violence and social breakdown as much as poverty and unemployment. But the economy is shrinking—by 1.7 per cent in the last quarter of 1989, by 1.3 per cent in the first quarter of 1990, and by another 0.8 per cent in the second quarter. That was before the latest violence which some predict could produce negative growth of up to 5 per cent next year. All too easily one can see the possibility of a downward spiral in which violence borne of poverty generates more poverty, generates more violence, generates...

South Africa could go that way. But it is important to the whole world that it doesn't—that black liberation is not seen to spell inevitable disaster, that a working example of multiracial democracy can be achieved, that the whole continent of Africa is not written off. If ever there was a special case, this is it.

Within the country, the main imperative has to be some sort of rapprochement between the ANC and Buthelezi. Nothing would do more to reduce ethnic strife, restore peace, help confidence and shore up the economy. The problem is that a deal which brought Buthelezi back within the ANC—of which he was a member for many years—would immediately make him second only to Mandela in importance, for he would then have a position on the ANC executive *and* a huge personal power base.

Moreover, room would doubtless have to be made for a number of other leading Zulu figures at the top of the ANC. This would have the effect of pushing a whole lot of other ANC constituents—the Communist Party and the trade unions, not to mention a large number of Indians, whites and other non-Zulus—further down the queue. Naturally, all such forces will combine to prevent any deal with Buthelezi. In addition, almost all of the UDF and ANC in Natal have based their careers on a furious opposition to Buthelezi and would feel wholly undermined by any deal.

Quite apart from all the blood that has flowed, the *real politik* is that a deal with Buthelezi would transform the balance of power within the ANC—and this at a time when the movement is confused and there is much nervy scrambling for position. It is a tall order but there may be no other way to peace. Everything, once again, depends on what Mandela does—for within a few months of his emergence from gaol he has become South Africa's indispensable, providential man. How on earth, one wonders, did the country manage without him for 27 years? ●

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No cheers for democracy

Pan-Arab nationalism lets Iraq and other Middle East regimes crush human and minority rights, argues Samir al-Khalil

Bizarre as it may seem, the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait is genuinely seen by the Ba'thi state as an extension of the total amount of freedom available to the Arab people. The anti-imperialist rhetoric of pan-Arabism revolves around the idea of freedom from imperialism, towards unity of an artificially fragmented whole. Ba'thism takes for granted that dismemberment can only serve the interests of outsiders like the United States, Britain, France, and ultimately Israel.

Half a century ago, Michel Aflaq, the Syrian founder of the Ba'th movement, attacked what he called "bourgeois democracy" for idealising the state of being divided within oneself. He poured scorn on the idea of a "government that executes and a parliament that criticises, attacks and objects". Nationalism, as he saw it, was "love before anything else". The quality of Arabness in a human being was measured by the intensity of this inner feeling of love towards the idea of a single Arab nation. It was not even possible to be an Arab without believing in the imperative of union between all Arabs at the same time. This is the core idea of Ba'thism.

In 1978, Shibli al-'Aysami, the assistant secretary of the National Command of the Ba'th based in Baghdad, formulated in more sophisticated language how this idea of freedom was completely bound up with the Ba'thi conception of socialism. Bourgeois democracy, which was against unity and for capitalism, had to be replaced by "popular democracy", which was against imperialism, and for Arab unity and so-called socialism. These three words, "Unity, Freedom and Socialism", are permanently inscribed as banner headlines on every newspaper, in every publication, across all major streets and on huge wall-posters all over Iraq. They have been repeated *ad nauseum* so that most Iraqis have forgotten that they do sometimes have other meanings, apart from those imparted to them over the decades by Ba'thi ideology.

The morality of a state, unlike that of an individual, ought to be judged by its own beliefs and laws. At bottom, all states refuse to recognise higher norms of behaviour than those that govern their own relations with their citizens. And very frequently they apply different standards outside to those they could ever get away with inside their borders. The history of diplomatic relations between the west and Iraq

Kuwaitis meet to talk in Kuwait City's gold market. The Ba'th believe it is not even possible to be an Arab without believing in the imperative of union between all Arabs

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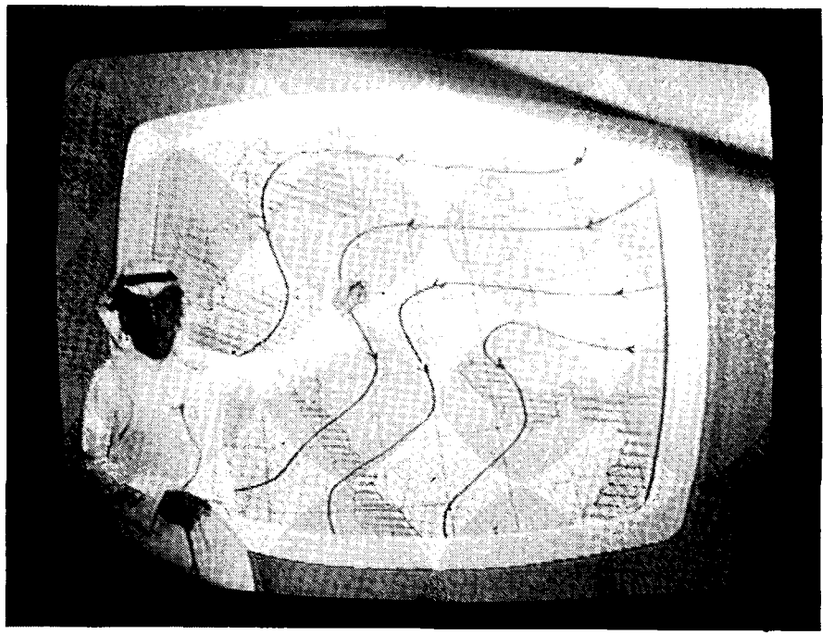

Keith Pattison

'The invasion of Kuwait has already opened up political fissures Arab political rhetoric had hitherto papered over'

during the Iraq-Iran war is a case in point.

The American/west European tilt towards Iraq was maintained all the time that the Ba'th were busy killing their own Kurdish population. But in killing Kurds, however wantonly, the regime in Iraq happened to be breaking no law or moral sanction known to it or understood by it as such. The law that reformed the whole legal system in Iraq in 1977 (law no. 35), takes great care to exclude from citizenship "all persons who take a political, economical or intellectual attitude hostile to the Revolution and its programme". Nor is this an aberration. The law is a distillation of everything the Ba'th have been saying about what constitutes Arab identity since the 1940s, in Syria, Iraq and everywhere else that the Ba'th party has cells or an organised presence of some kind. It is, after all, simply a way of excluding those who don't "love" the Arab nation hard enough.

To every criterion of membership there must correspond criteria of exclusion. In the Ba'thist mind-set, therefore, killing separatist Kurds differs not one iota from annexing Arab Kuwait. Both ways of thinking are driven by a higher norm: the need to bring about the unification of something that has been artificially and wrongfully divided.

Hence the self-righteousness of the official Iraqi tone in the current crisis, and the genuine indignation felt in all official quarters in Baghdad at what is perceived as the hypocrisy of western moralising about "international law", and the restoration of Kuwaiti sovereignty. Iraqis know from experience that the west would not care a fig-leaf for that were it not for Kuwaiti oil reserves.

The deeper tragedy is that this Ba'thi view of the world simply carries to an extreme something that Arab political culture as a whole has, by and large, taken for granted. In the broad trends of modern Arab intellectual discourse the idea of freedom has never had its western connotation of personal soverignty, or the right to autonomy of the part in relation to the whole. A state like Kuwait is "artificial" and "historically illegitimate" in the eyes of most Arabs. Although some very important thinkers did toy with ideas of autonomy, and the legitimate sovereignty of different parts of the 20th-century Arab state system, they were soon tarred with the brush of being too "western". The growth of mass politics following the second world war shunted them aside. Taha Husayn, for instance, whose priority was the idea of an Egyptian identity, was attacked with great zeal by the religious scholars of al-Azhar.

Certainly, no Arab state is as reprehensible and brutal as the Ba'thi state in Iraq. Yet none of the states in the region is a democracy. Nor do any of them accept the principle of the inviolability of individuals or minorities within the law as a basis for the constitution of the body politic.

The picture is only marginally less gloomy when one moves to the more enlightened sections of the Arab intelligentsia. Consider, for example, the case of a 900-page book published in 1984, *The Crisis of Democracy in the Arab Homeland*. The book is a compilation of the views of over 100 Arab thinkers, academics and liberal policy-makers who met during a five-day symposium to debate democracy in the abstract, in Arab thought and in Arab countries.

The symposium was held in Cyprus, because it had been banned in every Arab country approached by the convenors. This should have imparted a great deal of excitement to the proceedings. Indeed, one or two contributions did convey a critique of contemporary Arab practices as a sort of logical implication of the argument. But on the whole these tended to be presented in very abstruse theoretical language which was unlikely to offend or challenge anyone.

Not a single participant described concrete abuses from his own country. Far too many were preoccupied with finding confirmation or "equivalences" for modern democratic ideas in "the Arab-Islamic heritage". All were agreed on the objective of Arab unity, although some took issue with the demagogic way in which this issue had been put in the past. Nothing was said about different moral outlooks on individual state sovereignty, personal privacy, toleration, self-determination or the status of non-Arab minorites like the Kurds. These must follow from the adoption of a truly different notion of freedom than the one that has dominated Arab discourse in the modern period.

Finally, the introduction to the book stressed that a central "objective reason" for placing increased attention on the question of democracy in the first place was "the grave failure of Arab regimes to confront Israeli aggresssion". But the rallying call used so many times in the past precisely to snuff out individual freedom, or the freedom to be separate and different, was always "Everything for the battle [against Israel]." So is a new pluralist conception of democratic freedom (the freedom to be separate or left alone) desirable in and for itself?

The kindest thing that can be said about such a symposium is that it represents a very feeble and unfocused response to the terrible conditions of Arab politics today. Just think of the ravages of the Lebanese civil war, much less the brutality of Saddam Hussein's regime. Not a word was spoken about either by any participant. It is a far cry from the state of the democratic opposition in eastern Europe in the years immediately preceding the collapse of that whole state system.

No matter what the outcome of the international crisis sparked off by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, its ramifications for Arab politics will prove to be cataclysmic. How the crisis is resolved is of the greatest importance.

If force on a grand scale is used to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty, and if "brother" Arabs are seen to be fighting with one another over this issue, the long-term impact on political culture in this part of the world is bound to be enormous. One thing is for certain: the next conference to be held in Cyprus on the crisis of democracy is going to have a more relevant agenda than the last.

The invasion of Kuwait has already opened up political fissures which Arab political rhetoric had hitherto papered over. There is the obvious point that this is the first time one Arab country has invaded and annexed another since the formation, by great power *diktat*, of the modern Arab state system. But more than the establishment of a political precedent is at stake.

For the underlying cause of the Gulf crisis is the abject failure of Arab political culture even to formulate, much less solve in practice, questions of legitimacy, freedom and the nature of citizenship. Saddam Hussein is not only a ruthless leader of a nasty state. He is acting upon a world that had itself gone rotten, and was totally unequipped at the level of ideas and values to oppose him. ●

Samir al-Khalil is the author of *Republic of Fear*, published by Hutchinson Radius

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Desert bloom

The picture being painted of Kuwait as an undemocratic despotism is an ignorant caricature, says Susan Shuaib

When I left Kuwait 13 years ago, my family expected me to return once I completed my education—and I expected to do so too. I am half-British, half-Kuwaiti, both western and Arab.

But when I came to live in Britain I found a strange land, not one I ever thought I would regard as home. I felt Kuwaiti, identified with Kuwait, and spoke Arabic better than English. I found here a people who knew hardly anything about the country I had come from. I had to draw little maps to show people where Kuwait was. I got rather tired of being asked, "Does your father own an oil well?"

I missed Kuwait. I missed the desert in spring-time, with its sudden green after a thunder-burst. I missed the flowers—carpets of blue-violet irises along a valley floor, and others, pale pink and no larger than a thumb-nail, which one could find if one knew where to look. I missed the weekly gatherings at my grandmother's house, where afternoon tea was still brewed on coal, and was drunk sweet and black, with shortbread and "heb"—dried watermelon seeds. This was where the women and children gathered, where the conversation was constant, loud and animated.

Eventually I overcame my nostalgia. In Britain I discovered independence—an inevitable part of growing up—and feminism. Kuwait is a small, traditional society. One does traditional things, like living at home before one gets married, and getting married sooner rather than later. Women don't have the vote. In Britain I was a free agent. I could live alone with my two cats in an Hackney basement flat, and no one would bother me. I wanted it to be possible to reach 30 and still not be married. I missed the density of Kuwaiti society, but I also realised that I would never be completely comfortable in it. In the end, Britain won. I would visit Kuwait, but I knew I would not return permanently.

Suddenly, no one needs my little maps. But I hardly recognise the picture of my country being painted in the British press: of a fabulously wealthy but politically sterile nation—little more than an oil-field with a flag; a land ruled by a clique of effete despots, which has used its money to buy in slave labour from abroad, and to pamper its citizens into docility at home. I read again and again about the suspension of Kuwait's parliament, and that the only opposition comes from the religious Shia minority.

I find it hard to accept this ignorant caricature. Westerners who (rightly) condemn the suspension of the parliament and constitution have assumed that this means the absence of politics within Kuwaiti society. But Kuwait has a strong tradition of civil society, where politics continues at a lower, more organic level, despite what's being determined by rulers—something, I suggest, that a highly centralised western society like Britain might do well to look at.

From the moment parliament was suspended four years ago, a slow, but firm, demand for another more democratic parliament has been growing. The people pressing for democracy came largely from the middle class. Many were western-educated professionals. The younger generation, both men and women, returning from American and European universities, became increasingly involved.

Under the constitution of 1962 (drawn up after Kuwait's independence), a suspended parliament had to be replaced within 40 days, or the old parliament could consider itself still sitting. The Emir didn't of course accept this argument. When MPs tried to enter the old parliament building, they were barred. Finally a core group of ex-MPs lost patience and organised a petition for the reinstatement of parliament, signed by thousands of the 60,000 eligible male voters. A supplementary petition was organised, signed by women who supported the democratic movement. This was partly intended to lay the ground for a petition at some point in the future asking that women should be allowed to vote. They started a series of regular Monday meetings, area by area, which anyone, including women and children, could attend. When they first started, about 100 people attended. By the end they had about 1,000.

Perhaps most interesting of all, they used the *diwanieh* network. Traditionally, a *diwanieh* is a room or garden enclosure attached to someone's house where men meet to talk—a social gathering point. Because so many people wanted to come, they broadcast the speeches outside, where women as well as men gathered. Video recordings were made for distribution to those unable to attend. The message was passed on in other *diwaniehs*.

The organisers were arrested. *Diwaniehs* in their traditional form are not illegal. Causing large gatherings outside them is. Then, ten days into 1990, the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sa'ad, said his door was open for talks.

Two days after the talks ended, the Crown Prince announced the new form that parliament was to take. In June, parliament was reinstated, a shadow of its former self. The speed with which its shape was determined left many people feeling the whole thing had been cooked up. Out of a total of 75 representatives, 25 were to be appointed by the Emir. It did not have the same law-making powers as the old parliament. As one woman activist said, "it is a piece of junk." The new parliament was to be an "experiment", which would last four years. Its main purpose was to look at "what went wrong" with the old parliament and to determine in what form the constitution should be brought back.

I don't want to overstate matters, or be unduly romantic. But, before 2 August, the future for democracy, while uncertain, was not devoid of hope. Now it is bleak. When the west chides Kuwait and the Arab world for its lack of democracy, it ought at least to report that Saddam has swallowed a country whose citizens were actively striving for democracy —and where a tradition of civil society made it possible so to do. Even if the Sabah family is restored to power, Kuwait will remain on a war footing for a long time to come—and the political space which allowed the democratic experiment will have vanished. ●

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Blue bloods

Where is the new Tory party? Kirsty Milne has been drinking gin-and-tonics with the next generation

It is an uncertain time for a young Conservative with an eye on the future. Should you stick with Adam Smith or brush up your Disraeli? Brandish aloft the torch of an enduring Thatcherism, or exploit her declining years to rediscover the patrician charm of the One Nation Tory?

A passion for vouchers and privatisation may not be the political asset it once was. After two elections which have seen baby Thatcherites pouring into parliament and thence into junior government posts, the prospects for thoroughbred young men with think-tank affiliations now look less assured.

Take the case of Oliver Letwin. The 34-year-old author of *Privatising the World* is a Keith Joseph protégé who was a member of the Downing Street policy unit and now heads the international privatisation unit at Rothschilds. Come the next election, he will be on the streets of Hampstead and Highgate protecting a fragile Conservative majority from the magnetism of Labour's challenger, Glenda Jackson.

But if he manages to get elected, Letwin risks making his parliamentary début just when the tide of Conservativism could be on the turn. His friend John Redwood, possessed of a dry-ice intellect and politics to match, came into parliament in 1987 and is already a junior minister at the DTI. But Letwin, who worked under Redwood at No. 10 and inherited his job at Rothschilds, could find his kind of politics more in demand in eastern Europe than at Westminster.

The prospects for thoroughbred young men with think-tank affiliations now look less assured

Letwin is realistic enough to know that he may have picked his political moment badly. A philosopher's training (he was a don at Cambridge) has left him with a readiness to entertain any scenario. "I can readily envisage circumstances in which I wouldn't want to be a member of the Conservative Party—if the next leader were an out-and-out European federalist, for example. But I'm an optimist. I think there is reason to hope that whoever succeeds will carry on the greater part of what the Prime Minister stands for."

More reason to hope now, he maintains, than four or five years ago—a "dangerous time" when the outstanding young ministers in the government were "the Pattens and Waldegraves of this world—very nice people, but with a decisively different conception of the way we should be going."

These faint hearts have been followed into the foothills of government by a breed of radical right-winger with whom Letwin identifies: young members of the No Turning Back Group such as the newly promoted Peter Lilley, environment minister Michael Portillo, Richard Ryder at the Treasury and John Redwood at the DTI.

Letwin and David Willetts, his friend and fellow-candidate, are the standard-bearers of the "clever right" among the new generation of Conservatives. Willetts, who is 34, runs the influential Centre for Policy Studies and will fight the safe seat of Havant at the next election.

Backbiting and swirls of suspicion surrounded both selections. Conservatives are uniquely able to make "clever" sound like a term of abuse. They don't like high-flyers (Letwin is described as "oleaginous" by his detractors) and they don't like "academic capitalism".

In Letwin's case, "academic capitalism" has meant arguing for education vouchers, road tolls and health service charges. At the Downing Street policy unit he helped formulate the poll tax, which he expects to be a "dead issue" by the time of the next election. And he holds decided views on Europe, believing that Britain is being bounced into becoming a province of a federal Europe while there is still the option of a wider, looser association based on free trade.

Yet, in conversation, Letwin is neither doctrinaire nor evangelising. He is less convinced and more considering than you might expect—allowing, for example, that there is "nothing intrinsically wrong" with state ownership: "it's just that historically it has been misused." Far from being obsessed by the market, he describes it as "a tiny fragment of human existence" and dislikes being characterised as a "free-marketeer".

On social issues, he takes a libertarian approach which emphasises personal responsibility and self-reliance. Questioned about Conservative family policy, he argues, "It's not for governments to tell people how they should live their lives—even whether they should live in families or not."

Letwin's startling pragmatism ("I don't feel naked in the absence of a theory") may be well advised. The Prime Minister is still the outstandingly ideological figure in a party which mistrusts ideology. The former deputy chief whip, Tristan Garel-Jones, let it be known that young MPs are picked for promotion on personality and ability, not ideological leanings; being what Conservatives call "a good sort" rates higher than being an ardent Thatcherite.

Just as Douglas Hurd and Kenneth Baker survived their early closeness to Edward Heath, so it's generally agreed that new MPs of Letwin's and Willetts's calibre will rise regardless of a shift in the politics of the party. Some suggest that the practicalities of nursing a seat and being forced to "hack it at the coalface" have forced Letwin to dilute his dogmatism.

Yet he and David Willetts are the most radical of the current crop of young candidates. There isn't a gang of hardline Thatcherites queuing up to join them on the back-

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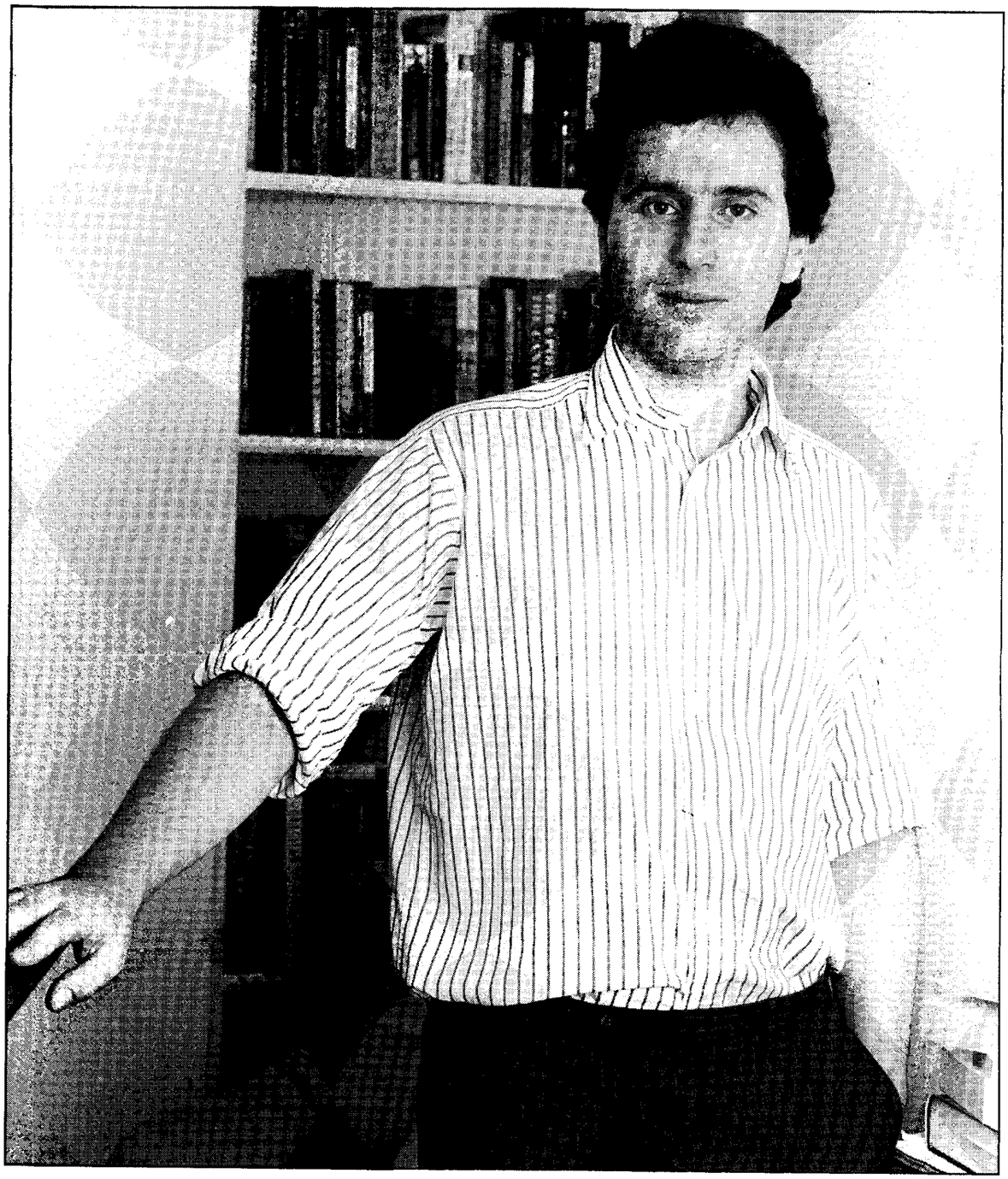

Jillian Edelstein

Letwin, described as oleaginous by his detractors, dislikes being characterised as a free marketeer

benches after the next election. On the contrary, most up-and-coming Conservatives would not be unduly uncomfortable in a party led, for the sake of argument, by Chris Patten.

The composite candidate is in his early thirties and works for a merchant bank or a PR company—a career he has interrupted for a spell in Whitehall as a minister's political adviser. He always wanted to go into politics and stuck blue drawing pins in maps at public school. He is courteous, formal, and appears 20 years older than he really is.

He knows that Europe is on the way in, and likes the free trade aspects of 1992, though the Social Charter makes him fidget and political union makes him shudder. He is very keen on markets: his strongest ideological gambit is "I believe in giving people choices." He finds it gratifying that Labour has, as far as he can see, adopted the 1979 Conservative manifesto.

Dry on the economy and wetter on welfare, he wears the badge of pragmatist with pride. His ideal leadership candidate would be an amalgam of Michael Portillo and Chris Patten. In fact, the world of think-tanks like the Adam Smith Institute is a million miles away from the Conservative Party of which he is a member. Cambridge graduate he may be, but for him Conservative thought is represented by the *Daily Telegraph*, not the *Salisbury Review*.

These are not proselytising privatisers or voucher enthusiasts; these are young men (and they are invariably men) who have to be pressed to name an issue that exercises them. They are secure in their inheritance; the Prime Minister's shadow is so long that they cannot see beyond her.

It takes an expatriate Conservative to formulate a coherent vision of what a post-Thatcher Conservatism might look like. Andrew Sullivan writes for the *Daily Telegraph* and the Washington-based political weekly *New Republic*. At 26, he has just finished a Harvard thesis on the Conservative political philosopher Michael Oakeshott, and combines a fluent intellect with a certain political prescience. As long ago as 1985, the Centre for Policy Studies published his pamphlet *Greening the Tories*, which urged the party to

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embrace environmentalism. ("No. 10 thought it was awful. They were asking, 'Whoever hired him?'")

Sullivan has all the hallmarks of a young Thatcherite; he strongly opposes state aid to industry; he believes the government should withdraw funding from the arts and the universities; he wants a lower single rate of income tax.

But living in America has, he says, given him a new perspective on British Conservatism. "Here the status of individual rights is far stronger, enshrined against the state with the backing of the courts." For Sullivan, this suggests a possible way forward. "Thatcherism has enfranchised ordinary people, giving them economic power in the marketplace. We should build on that by offering the same equality of treatment in civil life."

Sullivan urges his party to accommodate the diversity of modern society by developing a Conservative conception of citizenship which would be "shallow, narrow, and equal". His limited state would enforce anti-discrimination laws to protect women, blacks and homosexuals (and Catholics in Northern Ireland) while rigorously avoiding any kind of preferential treatment, such as affirmative action. Sullivan's ideas—which include equalising the age of consent for gays and straights ("it costs no money, and it doesn't involve empowering the state at the expense of the individual")—were less than warmly received when he delivered last year's T E Utley memorial lecture to an audience which had in it Keith Joseph, John Biffen, Rupert Murdoch and *Telegraph* proprietor Conrad Black.

But there is a logic in his reading of the Thatcher revolution, and it troubles the coming generation. Relaxed libertarians and anxious re-moralisers are at odds over how far Conservatives should seek to impose on others ideals of nationalism, Christian morality, and family life.

Oliver Letwin is not alone in taking a minimalist view. Charles Hendry, 31-year-old candidate for the safe seat of High Peak, detects among his contemporaries a trend towards "the idea that morality shouldn't be imposed by government. It's up to religious bodies to push the moral dimension."

Conservatives in their twenties and thirties are uneasy about the idea of a "family policy" and particularly about skewing the tax system to encourage women to stay at home with their children.

But these reservations do not translate into a full-scale *laissez-faire* approach to social policy. One candidate who dislikes the idea of a Conservative government "telling women how to live their lives and how to bring up their children" nevertheless opposes Sunday trading on the grounds that it would disrupt family life.

Conservative resistance to libertarian thinking provokes frustration and depression on the radical right. Martin Summers, a policy analyst who works with the Institute for Economic Affairs, complains that the liberal social policy which complements radical free market views has made no headway in the party at all. "I think many Conservatives are uneasy with a pluralist society. They feel society is fragile, and needs an overarching morality to preserve it."

If today's young Conservatives are as pragmatic as they seem, they must know that the values of the small town, the parish and the nuclear family can no longer apply to an urban, secular, atomised Britain. In the early eighties, the Young Fogeys built a movement round an elegant and arrogant refusal to face these facts. But the future doesn't lie with High Anglicanism and Georgian architecture.

Where the future does lie is a question which most of these aspirant MPs have not yet got round to. They worry about education, but have little interest in what happened to the government's inner cities policy. Aside from the rare Heseltine supporter who speaks passionately about 1992 and the needs of business, they are ostrich-like or hostile towards Europe. Although they will be representing her party long after she's gone, the Prime Minister is still their Big Idea. ●

EXPLOITATION

Immoral panics

Sensationalising paedophilia and child abuse evades the issue, argues Elizabeth Wilson

Moral panics are a menace. Take the Teddy boys, the object of a panic in the fifties, who actually posed the mildest threat to law and order. The youths' main crime was to insist on wearing a particular style of dress and hair, but judges, the police, psychiatrists and the media responded as if to the arrival of Hitler on our shores. More recently, Stuart Hall and others have analysed the creation in the seventies of a moral panic around "muggers". They have shown how this articulated racism at the same time as diverting popular attention away from the real plight of black youth.

The most recent moral panic in Britain has been pornography, and this now seems to be moving towards a concentration above all on child pornography. Hatred of Teds and muggers actually displaced fears of violence; now the issue is abusive sexuality—or is it?

I want to argue that there is a moral panic about pornography, paeodophile rings and satanic ritual abuse of children, because our society cannot deal with the problem of child sexual abuse. It has remained hidden because it so often takes place within the sanctified haven of the family. Feminist efforts to place it on the public agenda have been hampered not so much by the horror of those appalled by the abuse, as by the fear of powerful men that parental, and particularly male, authority in the traditional family is being challenged.

The current media and police obsession with organised child pornography rings is not part of the solution; it is part of the problem, and Tim Tate's new book, *Child Pornography: an Investigation*, illustrates why. In using terms such as "obsession" and "moral panic", I am not seeking in any way to minimise the cruelty of child sexual abuse, nor its frequency, nor the exploitation and suffering involved in both child abuse and the production of pornography associated with it. I do not advocate the repeal of existing legislation relating to child pornography, although I wonder to what extent it really protects children.

Even if in very different societies, sexual relationships between children—or adolescents at least—and adults may have been non-abusive, I don't believe that in our society they can be. And I do not feel they should be condoned. I state plainly my abhorrence of any exploitative and abusive

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sexual relationship, above all with children, because in criticising Tim Tate's sensationalising and misguided book I know I risk being accused of defending what he attacks. Such is the low state of the whole porn debate that anyone who dissents from the anti-porn lobby's general position risks the accusation of being in league with pornographers, a tactic indicative of an irrationalist attitude, which essentially can brook no debate—which is always dangerous.

Tate's book consists in large part of descriptions of child pornography, the testimony of molesters, statements by police investigators and the rehash of stories such as the history of the Paedophile Information Exchange. The tone throughout is of shock horror and "now it can be revealed." It aims to arouse horror and fear and to convince the reader that child abuse and porn are far more pervasive than we can possibly believe. The aim is legitimate—yet surely we do need some statistics, however hard to obtain, not just assertions from "reformed" offenders and special police squads, who cannot be impartial. A number of dubious theories about the aetiology of child sexual abuse are mentioned in passing as though they were established fact, but never receive serious discussion. We are told that abused children become abusers in adult life, for example—but then why are there so few female abusers, when the vast majority of abused children are girls? The escalation theory is assumed (on the analogy of smoke one joint and the next thing you know you're shooting up under a railway bridge). We are told that paedophiles are "addicts"—another dubious analogy; surely "compulsion" is a more accurate description.

My most serious objection to this book, and the perspective it represents, however, is that the villain is undoubtedly the paedophile. We have moved away from the feminist concern with the family and back to the stranger in the raincoat who preys on children, and, no longer isolated, organises conspiracies and porn rings both inside and outside prison. The Gay Liberation Front, the nudist publication *Health and Efficiency*—referred to as "the paedophile's favourite monthly magazine"—and anyone who, for example, opposed the 1988 legislation against child pornography—all are made to seem either sinister or extremely naïve. (Nudists also came under attack at, of all places, the National Trust AGM earlier this year, where attempts were made to associate them with homosexuals.)

With the paedophile comes the victim—"Save the Children" is the title of the final chapter. Of course children are victimised, and it is surely wrong to emphasise child collusion with, and even enjoyment of, abuse, as psychoanalysts have sometimes done. Yet I feel that we are coming close to a complete rejection and denial of the fundamental Freudian insight that children have sexual impulses at all. As Rosalind Coward argued in a recent article (*NSS* 13 April, 1990), it becomes almost impossible to mention this in a climate of emotional revulsion. In this context, the apparently completely separate attack on nudists does seem to connect with a fear in some quarters of any openness about the body.

Tamara Capellaro

An attack on nudists does seem to connect with a fear of any openness about the body

The main issue, though, is that the demonisation of the paedophile helps us to forget that, on a recent estimate, 44 per cent of known instances of child sexual abuse are carried out by the natural father of the child. Angela Rumbold recently tried to lead us away from these "attacks" on the family by emphasising the role of stepfathers and mothers' boyfriends—but, according to Tim Tate, paedophiles often deliberately seek out single mothers in order to abuse their children. But, despite these arguments, we do have to come to grips with the way in which the highly privatised "traditional" family, whether natural or "reconstituted", seems to act as a forging ground for abuse.

The reason for the stalemate over Cleveland is that our society—or the men with power in it—cannot cope with the challenge to patriarchal privilege and male domination in that bastion of gender (and generational) inequality. Thus the feminist perspective is essentially lost. It is much safer to target anonymous "perverts". Everyone can feel shocked and disgusted, and from there it is easy to slip into agreeing with Tate's proposals for more stringent and centralised law enforcement.

To be fair, Tate recognises that education and understanding are more important than the heavy-handed state. He often quotes Ray Wyre, therapist at the Gracewell Clinic for offenders, many of whose views seem very sensible. Wye recognises, for example, that the "family dysfunction" family therapy model of treatment may act to absolve the abuser, and also that to blame pornography may have this effect as well (a point Tim Tate himself appears to miss). All in all, however, this book represents the tabloid version of reality, and blames—yet again—the "permissive sixties" for all our sexual tragedies. ●

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LETTERS

The People's Palace

Julian Spalding's attempt (Letters, 17 August) at a riposte to the article by James Kelman on what has been happening over what is known in these parts as the Elspeth King affair simply will not do.

Clearly, the book that is presently being discussed will deal in detail with what happened. In the meantime Mr Spalding would do well at the beginning of his stay in this city not to treat people as though they fell out of their cradles yesterday morning.

No one has ever said that Elspeth King created the People's Palace. What she has undoubtedly done—and I know of no one who disputes this—is change the place out of all recognition. Those of us who went there as children, or who took our own children there in turn, remember only too well its permanently under-funded and under-staffed situation. Of course previous curators made a contribution, but most of them acknowledge Ms King's transformation of the place. It is laughable that Mr Spalding omitted from his list of previous curators Ms Elspeth Gallie—has he got a hang-up of some sort about women called Elspeth?

I have written elsewhere on how I knew some three months before the appointment that Mr O'Neill was to be the lucky—very lucky—recipient. But for Mr Spalding to try to convince intelligent people that a young man of some four years' experience has achieved "international recognition" for his work is pushing smart-assery a bit too far. If he has this "international recognition" then chapter and verse, Mr Spalding, please.

But the most telling paragraph in his letter is the one about Ms King's performance at her interview. Mr Spalding was, I understand, on the short list for the post of director at both the V & A and the Tate. I assume he, in his disappointment at not gaining either post, would welcome someone disclosing to the world their view of his performance at interview? Must do—how else can he think it OK to comment on Ms King's performance at hers?

Your readers should know that both Mr Spalding and Ms King are the employees of a Labour-controlled authority —Glasgow District Council. Yet Mr Spalding is free to speak to the press—and does—as does Mr O'Neill. Ms King, on the other hand, is forbidden to speak to the press and has to endure attacks of which this immature letter from her director is only a small sample.

Over 500 people have written to the *Glasgow Herald* of their outrage over the treatment of Ms King, of whom "international recognition" is a truthful description. When 500 people—an astonishing number in any controversy—write in support of Messrs Spalding and O'Neill then we might have something to hang on to.

In the meantime, let me assure Mr Spalding that this letter of his has brought him well-deserved contempt from people who, like me, were so pleased and enthusiastic about his appointment when it was made.

Janey Buchan MEP
Peel Street
Glasgow

Not so green Tories

The hype and euphoria at last year's Conservative Party conference led to lavish praise for the Environment Secretary—and talk of an environment white paper as radical as the Beveridge Report. Twelve months on, the environment is still in poor health. But the political bravado is missing. Ministers have desperately been talking down the impact of the forthcoming white paper. The government's bluff has been called—and the government found lacking.

Two key proposals from the Environmental Protection Bill have already failed the environmental test.

A leaked Treasury report makes it clear that the proposed reorganisation of the Nature Conservancy Council is purely administrative, and of no benefit to nature conservation. This flies in the face of previous ministerial statements. The report was denied to MPs considering the bill under the guise of the confidentiality of sensitive information. Government hypocrisy—if not deception—has now been exposed.

Plans to implement integrated pollution control have collapsed also under the weight of government incompetence. The system by which companies will be expected to introduce BATNEEC (best available technique at no excessive cost) has been put back until April 1992 for existing factories and to April 1991 for new factories and major alterations. The infrastructure for implementation and regulation simply does not exist. The government has had over two years to set up mechanisms for implementation. It has failed to get to grips with the issues. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution is still overstretched and under-resourced.

Labour is committed to an independent national regulatory body, an Environmental Protection Executive. This is required to make effective the enforcement of policy, and development of policy by government. It is a level of commitment that the Conservative government has never approached.

The Department of the Environment and its Secretary of State, Chris Patten, have failed to take the initiative in environmental protection. The Environmental Protection Bill and white paper finally dispel the myth of Mrs Thatcher's "green conversion".

Joan Walley MP
House of Commons
London SW1

Historical perspectives

The obfuscatory nonsense about the Gulf crisis being talked by journalists, academics and international lawyers (eg, duties of occupying powers, despite the practice in the West Bank), with a few notable exceptions (Robert Fisk, Helga Graham), ought now to cease in favour of an honest declaration justifying the rights of superior arms. These cheap propagandists must know that the acts (as opposed to the presence) of the so-called UN force have nothing whatever to do with the vileness or otherwise of erstwhile friend Saddam Hussein. They should also consider that the US will be delighted if Saddam sends a force to Jordan to protect King Hussein in a few months' time so long as the awful Sabahs (good enough for Arabs apparently) are restored in the interim. May I recommend chapter 4 of Hugh Trevor-Roper's, *The Rise of Christian Europe* (1965, Thames & Hudson) to these experts for a homoeopathic dose of historical perspective.

Allying with a former director of the CIA and Mr John Kelly (spare a dime for their victims in Latin America) because of a remote possibility that Saddam may somehow be overthrown (no doubt to be replaced by a saint in an unchanging Gulf social order) merely underlines the disingenuousness and crass patriotism of most western experts. One can now sympathise with third-world regimes seeking the protection of nuclear weapons to counter the human rights lobby represented by the Saratoga.

Gautam Sen
London WC2

Depraved appeal?

It was kind of David Caute (Books, 17 August) to put in "a word" for *Blasphemy Ancient & Modern*, but what he said about it prompts two comments. One is that, unlike the other books reviewed with it, it did not have its origins in the *Satanic Verses* case, which occupies only 5 per cent of its space, but is a general account of the practice and punishment of heresy and blasphemy. The other is that I hope its appeal is not confined to "depraved secularists"!

Nicolas Walter
Rationalist Press Association
London N1

Political murders

I wish to take issue with the spurious parallels drawn by Alexander Cockburn in "Judge dreadful" (10 August) between the cases of IRA man Joe Doherty held in US custody for the past eight years and Orlando Bosch, a violent Cuban criminal specialising in attacking anything or anybody associated with the Castro regime.

The initial proposition made is that

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both have committed political offences of a comparable nature but that the treatment they have received from the US judiciary is inconsistent.

Mr Cockburn's thinly disguised sympathy for Joe Doherty as a legitimate freedom fighter clearly seeks to qualify him for political asylum in the US. What we are not told is that Joe Doherty is wanted to face trial for several murders in Northern Ireland.

The semantics of describing such murders as "political" is not an acceptable basis for failing to compel the perpetrators to answer for their crimes. Mr Doherty should indeed be grateful to US justice for failing to extradite him up to now.

The juxtaposition of the Bosch case, whatever its own validity, bears no relation to the issues raised by the Doherty case, and serves to illustrate, by false comparison, a relative injustice which is simply not admissible on consideration of the real facts of the case.

Raymond McCarthy
London SW17

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please)

● But a spokesman for Leeds City Council said Leeds is one of the best places to live.

"On a beautiful summer's morning, with the sun shining down on Leeds's expanding business, entertainment and shopping areas, and with Leeds United in the First Division, who would not believe that this is a marvellous city in which to live."—*Yorkshire Evening Post* (Mrs A Marlow)

● My wife is trying to teach me to cook, after 40 years of married life in which I have never approached a stove, and her imagination cannot encompass the depth of my ignorance. When making mayonnaise she takes for granted that I know what is meant by "now fold the whites into the yolks". But I don't, any more than pre historic man would have known how to strike a match.—*Daily Telegraph* (George Moor)

● Rossini orchestral sound is like no other—crisp, neat string phrases, piercing wind solos and thrilling climaxes.

Incl: *The Barber of Seville, The Thieving Magpie*, and *William Tell* (of Lone Ranger fame!).—Britannia Music Club monthly brochure (Alan Tobias)

FRINGE BENEFITS

Core curriculum

Colin Ward

My only contact with the world of higher education has been, late in life, as an occasional lecturer or external examiner. In consequence, I have a slightly rosy view of the whole scene. Quite apart from the cut-throat interdepartmental politics we all read about, there must, for the staff, be the endless slog of coaxing the work out of students whose real interests in life lie elsewhere.

Their problems are at their worst when it comes to the thesis or dissertation on which the final degree or diploma depends. There are students who gather a mountain of information which the old hands on the staff fear, often rightly, will never be boiled down into an acceptable document. Or there are students who choose a title that embraces the whole past or future of human civilisation. In vain their teachers suggest that an exploration of one tiny aspect of one small facet might provide not only a valuable thesis, but also a real contribution to knowledge.

This is the best possible advice. And it sometimes results in a piece of work that delights examiners as well as that particular student. I can remember dazzling dissertations in my own narrow range of interests, about children's play, or about the dens they build, or about holiday shacks and shanties or allotment huts, which have made firm friends for me among their authors. They were treading in terrain that nobody had thought worth exploring.

I was cutting the hedge one day when along came this planner and his family. He had been a student at what is now the Anglia Institute and had written a dissertation, which it had been my pleasure to read, on the theme of Horsiculture, meaning the new cult of riding. This entails driving out to the livery stables somewhere in the home counties, for the pleasure of riding around the local byways and bridleways before putting the horse back in storage for another week. It's a phenomenon with interesting environmental and social implications, but only this particular student found it a topic for analysis.

Just the other day, friends at Middlesex Polytechnic who wanted me to share their delight in a dissertation bubbling over with ideas sent me the work of Chris Wilbert, an undergraduate there. Etiquette requires me to record that I don't know him, nor was his examiner and am mentioning it without his knowledge. But I can understand how, amid endless meetings about how to spin out the budget, a piece of work like his must make his teachers feel the enterprise is worthwhile.

For a start he didn't choose a title like "Some considerations of the impact of industrial capitalism on tree-fruit growing." He called his piece, "The apple falls from grace." It traces the role of the fruit through mythology and religion, and the gardens and orchards that were all over 13th-century London, down to the present day. Now, although over 6,000 varieties of apple are known, commercial orchards are dominated by nine varieties, which most people claim have no taste.

Thirty years of research have produced a compact, columnar, branchless "tree", requiring no pruning and little space. Wilbert feels it bears little relation to a tree at all. As for the picking, this is done by an invisible workforce of part-time, mainly female and low-paid pickers, whose conditions of employment do not receive the degree of public sympathy given to agricultural workers. However, the Agricultural Development and Advisory Services Fruit Group advises employers on how to run a production line on "time and motion" principles.

He tells us that in Nanking, a sixth of the trees planted in the city are fruit-bearing, including lychees and mangoes. And that in Chandigarh, capital of the Punjab, the roads are lined with peaches and plums. He doesn't object to the London plane, but how much better, he suggests, to have the apple growing all over London *again*. He reminds us that apples symbolise health, immortality, love and fertility.

I'm reminded of American legends of Johnny Appleseed, and of William Godwin's comment 200 years ago on Milton's *Paradise Lost*: "Milton has written a sublime poem upon a ridiculous story of eating an apple, and of the eternal vengeance decreed by the Almighty against the whole human race, because their progenitor was guilty of this black and detestable offence."

The apple is the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and we can't have too much of that, can we? I hope that the coming year's crop of final-year students comes with imaginative explorations of topics which are so commonplace and close to hand that they are seldom thought of as thesis fodder.

Except by their examiners. They've seen every kind of recycling of received opinion on big issues, and yearn for work that reflects personal conviction, research and scholarship. Anyway, modern scholars of the Old Testament tell us that it was actually a pomegranate that Adam and Eve tasted in Eden.

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The women who wait

Mrs Thatcher, who visits eastern Europe next week, believes that the foremost freedom is the freedom to trade. Slavenka Drakulić disagrees. In a tour of the region's countries, she talked to women active in culture and politics. Their hopes have been dashed by the "gentle revolutions" that thousands of women helped to make. New governments seem keener to protect access to pornography than to safe, legal abortion. And everywhere women are told to wait for their needs to be met. Still they must fight for their rights.

Slavenka Drakulić is a leading Yugoslav feminist writer. She co-founded the first Yugoslav feminist group in 1979, and is the author of The Deadly Sins of Feminism, *and two novels,* Holograms of Fear *and* Marble Skin

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Magnum

I have to admit that I didn't know much about my neighbours in the eastern European countries. Or I knew just enough never to wish to pay them a visit. My friend used to go there with extra pairs of jeans and tights, and packs of chewing gum, selling them on the black market for incredibly high prices and then spending money in the restaurants and bars, like a drunken American.

I also remember my eastern neighbours as tourists in my own country, Yugoslavia—Hungarians, Poles, Czechs. We used to call them "tomato tourists" with the slight tone of contempt of those who live in a different world: we could easily cross the Italian border to buy elegant shoes or go to Vienna for a coffee and *Torte* at the Sacher Hotel.

Tomato tourists would come in their Wartburg or Volga cars stuffed with children, tents, and tinned food, in their out-of-fashion shorts and plastic sandals. The false-blonde, plump women would buy cheap tomatoes, potatoes and bread at the green market, happy that they could get out of their country, bathe in the Adriatic sea, and forget everything for a while, even our obvious prejudices towards them.

Yugoslavia had a higher standard of living, with more freedom, than all those countries in the "bloc". Seduced by this difference, who would want to travel to our own grim, frightened past? That is, until last winter, when it became clear that the advantages of Yugoslavia, like Cinderella's finery in the fairy tale, somehow turned into a 2,600 per cent inflation rate, civil war in Kosovo, and fear of what the future would bring. The real Cinderella was somewhere else—Hungary, Poland, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia—the countries where governments were overturned or well on their way down.

After what the west has called "the gentle revolution", what is going to happen to women there? Are they, in the revolutionary moment, forgotten again? And why focus on women? This question came from a Hungarian male colleague, whom I asked to help me establish some contacts for this article. Didn't I know that women in Hungary are fully emancipated? And when I asked him about feminists there, all I could hear on the other end of the telephone line was a man's laugh. But, as usual, it was enough to find just one woman in any given country to lead me through the labyrinth of (male) prejudices to other women and "the group".

HUNGARY

In Budapest that woman is Zsuzsa Berés, 38 years old, a translator and editor at the Corvina publishing house, a single mother of two children and a founding member of the Hungarian Green Party. "By the way," she says while we drink Earl Grey tea at her apartment in the old part of Budapest, near the Danube, "ours is the only newly emerged party that addresses women's needs."

The streets of Budapest remind me of Paris, only ruined. There are many imported goods—oranges, bananas and lemons, but they are too expensive for ordinary people. Pornography is displayed on all the news-stands and

Saying what you think in East Berlin

women walk by, ignoring, without questioning. Women here look better than in Poland or Bulgaria, but seem worn out. The clothes shops have a poor selection; even if you had the money, there wouldn't be much to buy.

Zsuzsa Berés is not a typical Hungarian woman. She is the daughter of an ex-diplomat, and has lived for some time in London. Her home could easily be mistaken for a middle-class one in New York: microwave, answering machine, VCR, computer, stereo. But she is perfectly conscious of where she is: in a state-owned apartment, holding down two jobs to support her kids, surrounded by people who can't imagine a woman living alone and being politically active.

"After 1948, when the Communists came to power, women were pushed into the labour force. But nothing else changed," says Zsuzsa. "The superstructure did not adjust to such a transformation. So women were overworked, working like men and also forced to keep house and children and to provide food. In itself, this was a full-time job. Many women want to see their husbands earn a decent living so they can leave a job that neither pays well nor gives any satisfaction. They would like to stay with their children but do not realise what this dependence would mean."

The case of Zsuzsa (a common Hungarian name) Vathy, a novelist and literary editor at *Kortárs* magazine, is also atypical. Married to a writer, she stays at home with her 12-year-old

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son, cooks, writes, and thinks there is no reason to discuss the issues facing women. She admits she is privileged and her view of the situation of Hungarian women is subjective. "My great luxury is that I am not the breadwinner." I ask her if she thinks women need a feminist movement. "I don't know what feminists fight for," she says.

There are women in electoral politics, however. For example, the head of the Social Democratic Party, Anna Petrasovits, who describes herself as "the only man among them". There is a feminist group too. It was founded three years ago by Enikö Bollobás, associate professor of American literature and women's studies at Szeged University. Their Hungarian Feminist Statement begins: "Women are conspicuously absent from the political turmoil of contemporary Hungarian society. Very few women are active in alternative opposition groups; in a similar way, the women's issue is not part of the political programme of any new party or movement. This we find alarming."

Enikö is a prominent member of the Democratic Forum, the party of Hungary's prime minister. In 1988, she wrote a report on the situation of women, which criticised the idea that women in Hungary are emancipated, and showed the difference between official statistics and real life. In her opinion, what makes the situation even worse is that women are generally not aware of their minority status, or they think it's natural.

I visited Enikö at her apartment in a villa on the hill overlooking Budapest, where she lives with her two children, her second husband, and her dog. She speaks about pornography, about the lack of kitchen facilities, about everyday sexism—a word hardly known in Hungarian society—and how her group made a videotape exposing sexism in TV commercials. "We started as a group of six, but we are more than 50 now. We meet regularly and people know where to find us." Still, they don't use one dirty word: "If you define feminists as people working to improve women's lives, then we are feminists, but we don't hold the flag high, because it doesn't give us a good image."

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

I want to surprise my friends in Prague with a big *Torte*, but looking for it is quite an experience. There aren't many pastry shops, there is little choice of cakes, and after 6pm everything closes anyway. I ask my friend why all the shops close at six: he tells me that the government wants to keep the streets empty.

Revolution in Prague started and finished with candlelight, a week-long November rebellion that shed no blood. The only traces of those events are a few candles lit at Václavské Námesti, where students were beaten by police and where in 1968 Jan Palach burned himself to death in protest at the Soviet occupation.

Dagmar Burešova, the minister of justice until the June elections, sits in her office, crosses her legs and speaks softly in Czech, proud that she represents the Havel government at the regional level. She is a famous lawyer who has mostly defended dissidents. The fact that there are only two women ministers in the new Czech and Slovak regional governments—and none at the national level—doesn't worry her. "We have more important things to do now: change the constitution, reform the judicial system. We have already abolished some clauses, freed political prisoners. But the process of establishing democracy is just beginning, and there is a lot to do."

I will hear this same sentence over and over in the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Bulgaria. In her cabinet, Burešova will appoint some women—not, she claims, because she wants to see more women in government, but because they are good professionals.

Hana and Lucie Belohradska—the mother a well-known dissident writer who was not published under the communist regime, and the daughter of a theatre director—are preoccupied with problems other than the status of women: Hana with the split of the old Writers' Union and the formation of a new trade union that will no longer exercise Communist Party control; Lucie with the low wages of her profession.

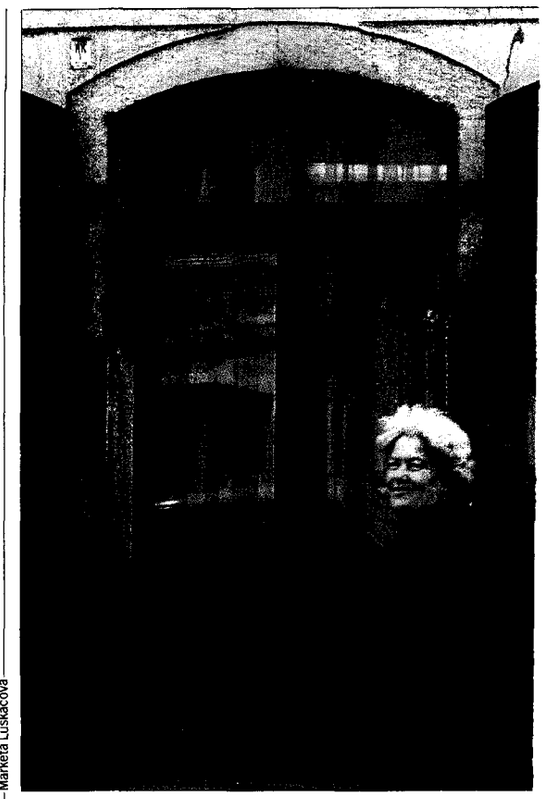
At the beginning of our discussion in the Writers' Club, they both maintain that, in their professions, gender doesn't matter at all. But the other side of the story slowly emerges. Yes, actresses are terribly underpaid, but this isn't the only problem. There are not enough good kindergartens, fast-food restaurants, or baby-sitters and cleaning people. "Women work like men," says Lucie, "but they don't have the privilege of living like men."

The idea that more money would solve women's problems is rather popular in Czechoslovakia, I discover. Women there don't see patriarchy as built into the system. According to this logic, women living in affluent western countries should have no problems. The isolation imposed by the lack of information becomes obvious. There are no foreign newspapers, TV programmes, books in translation, or feminist analyses at hand.

The other side of the story emerges. Women work like men, but don't have the privilege of living like men

There are novels, films, and documentaries on women. Not many, but it's only the beginning. This is the opinion of Sasha Berkova, a 40-year-old writer labelled as a feminist (the only one I hear of in Czechoslovakia) because her novels and stories deal with women's lives. Recently, her TV play on a mother-daughter relationship was well received. "Women told me, 'Finally somebody is writing about us.'"

Or as Veronika Maxova, writer and editor, wrote to me: "I have been thinking about your 'feminist' theme. Of course women have been



Markéta Luskacova

(and still are) underprivileged in this country. But the problem was the fourth article of the constitution, ie, the leading role of the Communist Party, which has been abolished. How can you do anything about your feminist rights in a totalitarian country, when your basic rights as a citizen are denied to you? As soon as these human rights are established then one can start doing something about women's rights." This, of course, is what women are always being asked to do, in all liberation struggles: wait until *after* the revolution. And reproductive freedom is a basic human right, too, for that matter.

EAST GERMANY

If we are to portray the situation of women here, maybe it is enough to say that the famous writer Christa Wolf, when speaking at a rally last November at Alexanderplatz, didn't mention women at all. If women are not speaking on behalf of women, nobody will. But there are some women who are speaking up—like Ina Merkel, informal leader of the newly formed umbrella political organisation, the Independent Women's Association: "Women were integrated into the democratic movement and they went to street demonstrations with their own demands: better living conditions, better wages, more free time—they work 48 hours a week over six days. Ninety per cent of all adult women are employed. They live under stress, with no time for family and children. A third of all children are born to single mothers: they subsist because of their relative economic independence (compared to other eastern European countries), low rent and the low cost of living, but now everything will change."

In the manifesto Ina wrote for the association, she maintains that socialism is politically

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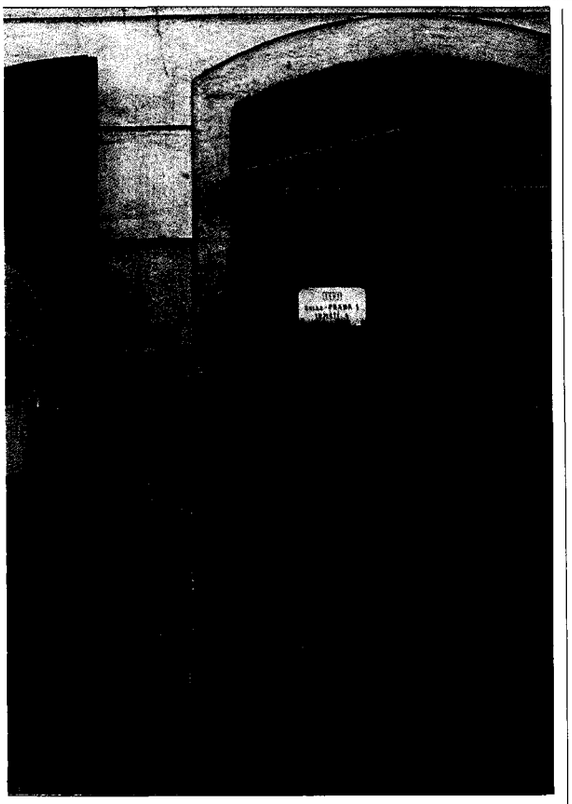

bankrupt and men are to blame. She is critical not only of pseudo-emancipation (and therefore asks for a quota of 50 per cent women in all political bodies and institutions), but of the emphasis on productivity in the economy. She stresses the ecological orientation of women in the economy, as opposed to the productivity principle of men, because she believes it is the only way to make fundamental economic change. For example, women see their children suffering from pollution, so they are more willing to change the economy. "Why does everybody need a car?" she asks.

Right now, the association is starting a feminist magazine, working for the elections, demanding a women's department in the government as well as exact data on women's wages and occupational categories. They also organised large demonstrations for better living conditions. In all of eastern Europe, these women are the best organised and the most active. They are more than 5,000 strong in east Berlin and about the same number in the rest of the country—and their ranks are growing.

As reunification talks proceed, east German women are finding they have a lot to lose—their right to a legal abortion is in jeopardy, and has become the most divisive issue of the two Germanys. Women must heed the words of Neues Forum co-founder Barbel Böhlay: "Until now, women influenced politics indirectly. Now they should enter politics and do it."

POLAND

Warsaw's buses are crowded with women carrying shopping on their way home from work—tired, but still stopping to provide for the family. The state-owned cafés serve coffee, tea, cola and alcohol. No juice, no bottled water.

Making the best of meagre resources in Czechoslovakia

I couldn't find one nice restaurant, except for a pizza place where it's necessary to make a reservation.

When I asked for a strong, outspoken woman, everybody pointed to Barbara Labuda, the Sejm (parliament) deputy in charge of the police, the army, and foreign affairs. She is one of the most important Solidarity leaders and one of the few women involved directly in politics.

I asked her why, when so many women were imprisoned because of Solidarity, so few are now holding political positions: women like Anna Walentynowicz, the trade union leader who sparked the incident that led to the formation of Solidarity. She worked at the Lenin shipyard with Lech Walesa, and was jailed for her organising. Where are women like Anna?

Labuda speaks of two "isms"—Catholicism and Communism. "Everywhere in the world women are treated as a subspecies," she says. "The Catholic religion, plus narrow-mindedness, closes women in a ghetto and refuses them the right to act in public. The other ghetto is communist ideology, which created the illusion of equality through tokenism—the obligatory percentage of women represented in each political institution."

While living in France for three years in the early 1970s, Barbara became active in the feminist movement. She believes it is now time to start such a movement in Poland. "In some countries that had so-called revolutions, women not only didn't get anything from the changes, but are going to lose something—the right to abortion."

It is impossible to speak about women in Poland without engaging the hottest issue—the proposal for a new abortion law. It was introduced in the old Sejm last spring (just before elections) and is supported by the Catholic church. The existing law provides for free and safe abortion: one of the new proposals seeks the complete prohibition of abortion plus punishment—three years' imprisonment for the woman as well as for the doctor. Solidarity is split over the issue.

Besides the attack on abortion rights, there is another new legal proposal supported by the Catholic church. "In Defence of the Conceived Child" calls for full protection of a foetus's civil rights. Under this proposal, a foetus could sue its "mother" for smoking and damaging *its* health. So-called pregnancy supervisors would defend the rights of the foetus. It will be a year or so before any action is taken on this bill, and perhaps the whole issue will be solved by a referendum. Women I talked with in Warsaw say this would be the only solution, because then this proposal wouldn't stand a chance.

In everything bad, there is something good. By many accounts, the abortion issue gave birth to a women's movement. It happened last year in May. There was a demonstration of more than 2,000 women in Warsaw. "Women demanded abortion rights, they wrote angry letters and petitions to the Sejm," says activist Jolanta Plakwicz. "It proved that they consider abortion their right and were not willing to relinquish it." After the demonstrations, her group decided to form a national organisation, the Polish Feminist Association.

Kobieta i zycie (*Women and Life*) is the largest weekly magazine for women in Poland, published regularly since 1946 and with a circulation of 500,000. It was typical of the periodicals published under the auspices of the Communist Party—like *Nök Lapja* in Hungary or *Vlasta* in Czechoslovakia—a mixture of propaganda, recipes and fashion. Last year it transformed itself into an independent magazine. But its dynamic chief editor and Sejm deputy, Anna Szymańska, didn't quit—she simply left the Communist Party (since dissolved). Since *Kobieta i zycie* has money and offices, it can continue to act.

Now that it is independent, Anna is trying to promote feminist ideas in the magazine. "Seventy to 80 per cent of a family's budget goes on food. The rest is barely enough for utilities, clothes, rent and so on. Women are suffering the most. We are trying to help them realise that they are not only poor—we all are—but underprivileged as well, and that it needn't be so."

While I was listening to all these brave and wonderful women in eastern Europe, I felt at home. They told me that they felt that way, too. They, because someone was finally asking them about their lives; I, because *they* proved that for the past decade I had been right; there *are* common problems of women living under the same system, and we pinpointed them. The thousands of little cracks women made in the wall finally made it collapse for everyone else.

What does democracy mean for women in eastern Europe? What do the women want? They want more food and human rights, but so do men. However, there are two issues of fundamental concern to women: reproductive rights and "forced emancipation". Without recognising these two issues, democracy becomes *male* democracy. Many women in eastern Europe believe their problems will be solved *later*, whatever that means. Many believe that higher standards of living—because of democratisation and a market economy—mean emancipation. Many simply want to stay at home.

Still, the question remains: what now? How to organise and act between the two stereotypes—one, the idea of a false or forced emancipation connected with a government we reject, and the other a feminism that we are afraid to accept? Some women, like those in east Germany, are finding answers.

Perhaps the gentle revolution was gentle because so many women participated in it. We called for "socialism with a human face". But when it was over women were again losers. "Democracy" as it is now is hurting women: it wants to manipulate our bodies. It defines emancipation in male terms. Meanwhile the rightist wave is rising. If women miss this chance to participate in political decisions, I'm afraid democratisation in eastern Europe will have a male face. And worse: in time, "democracy" will wear boots. ●

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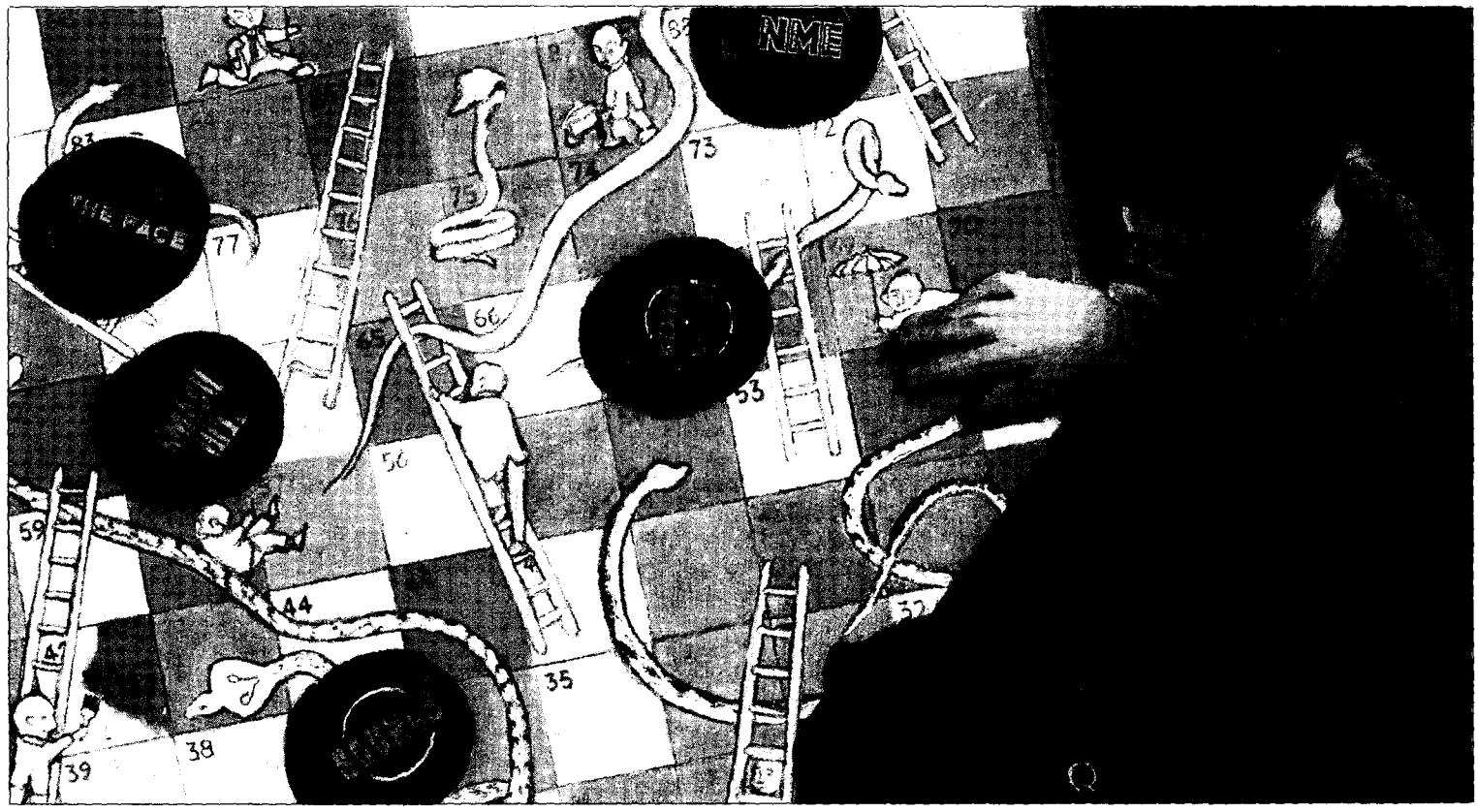

Sarah Pasquali

Return of the inkies

Teenybopper culture is out. Simon Reynolds on the resurgent rock press

During the eighties, there was a good living to be made writing obituaries for the weekly music press. The argument became depressingly familiar: the "inkies" (*New Musical Express, Melody Maker, Sounds*) were being squeezed out of existence. On one side, by the "style bibles" (The *Face, Blitz, iD*) which had usurped the weeklies' role of "cultural arbitration", and didn't get ink all over your fingers; on the other, by the teen glossies (*Smash Hits, Number One*) whose cheap and cheerful approach (personality-focused, fact-heavy and short-winded) was better suited to the "new pop" that dominated the mid-eighties. Rock was dead; now it was the turn of the rock press.

But now, by one of those unforeseeable but deliciously ironic twists of fate, the tables have turned. The music papers are enjoying a dramatic resurgence, and it is the teen rags and style mags that are ailing. *NME*, whose sales had plummeted from a 1980 zenith of 230,000 to around 90,000 has managed to arrest its decline. Its latest figures are 118,000 and rising. *Melody Maker* (which, like *NME*, is owned by IPC) has emerged from a long period of stagnant sales, with a 20 per cent increase in the last six months, taking it above 70,000 for the first time since 1982. Only *Sounds* is still poorly. The *Face*, meanwhile, has slipped from its 1986 peak of 93,000 to around 64,000. Most dramatic is *Smash Hits'* fall from 739,000 only a year ago to around 555,000.

According to Andy McDuff (publisher of *NME, MM*, and IPC's new rock monthly *Max*), *Smash Hits* owes its current problems in part to demographic change. "At its height, *Smash Hits* had a 50 per cent penetration of the 10-15 year-old market. It's linked itself too closely to that age group, which is now contracting." But it's also the case that *Smash Hits* has been confounded by the very upheavals in the UK pop scene that lie behind the *NME* and *MM*'s prosperity. This year, the charts have been besieged by "music press" bands for the first time since 1981: by the Manchester groups (Happy Mondays, Stone Roses, Inspiral Carpets, and so on), by indie/dance crossover outfits (Primal Scream, Soup Dragons), and even unreconstructed rock primitivists (Pixies, Ride). *Smash Hits* doesn't know how to deal with the new groups (most of which are too unprepossessing to be given the pin-up treatment) and has further suffered from a dearth of teenybopper sensations like Bros, whose place in the charts has been usurped by anonymous dance music.

The *Face* has floundered ever since the metropolitan style bubble burst. The magazine has endeavoured to get a grip on such phenomena as the suburban/provincial "rave" culture, the Manchester explosion, and even the revival of interest in rock festivals like Glastonbury, but has looked undignified when featuring the kind of spotty, indie bands that a few years earlier would have been barred entrance for not looking sufficiently stylish. The new animation and volatility of the British music scene (a week is still a long time in pop) is better suited to the inkies than the style monthlies with their long lead times. The music papers are currently competing fiercely to see which can identify itself most closely with Manchester.

According to McDuff, though, it's also the case that the music papers are "better products now". What this means is that they have consciously moved towards providing "a service" for their readers. Following the appointment of music paper veteran Alan Lewis as editor in 1987, the *NME* was forcibly shifted from its mid-eighties, highly politicised orientation to a more tabloid, populist direction. *Melody Maker* has flourished by balancing personality-oriented star interviews with a commitment to discovering new bands.

Behind these changes looms the spectre of *Q* magazine's phenomenal success (its sales have tripled since its 1987 debut, and now stand at over 170,000). Like EMAP's other success story, *Smash Hits*, *Q* was founded on the pre-

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mise that readers were deserting the music papers because they were alienated by the "vicious journalism" and "highbrow pretensions" that especially characterised the *NME* of the early eighties. *Q*'s success has had the effect of lowering, if not the tone, then the *temperature* of music journalism throughout the field. *Q*'s "objectivity", its non-partisan approach and avoidance of vehemence, has become the norm, resulting in the virtual extinction of the confrontational interview and critic-as-star "self-indulgence". And, following *Q*'s prodigious example, three new rock monthlies have been launched this year: *Select* (like *Sounds*, owned by United Newspapers), EMAP's ill-fated *Zig Zag*, and now IPC's *Max*.

After three issues, *Select*'s sales have settled around the 80,000 mark. *Zig Zag* was launched at the same time as *Select*, but lasted only one issue before being pulled. Its editor, Andy Darling, now believes that it was conceived from the start solely as a spoiler for *Select*, by an EMAP worried about the threat to *Q*'s advertising revenue. *Zig Zag*, a semi-fanzine with a rather chequered history, was bought after it folded in 1986.

The idea of relaunching it as a *Q*-type monthly came from EMAP Images, an allegedly "totally separate" branch of the company from EMAP Metro (which administers *Q* and *Smash Hits*), and hitherto mainly concerned with computer game magazines. Where *Select* and *Max* were the product of several years' gestation and research, Darling was given 17 weeks in which to "invent a magazine". Impeded by under-funding and inadequate facilities, *Zig Zag* was further sabotaged by having its launch rushed forward to compete with *Select*'s. EMAP Images' novel idea was to sell *Zig Zag* through the Our Price music retail chain. In the event, *Zig Zag* perished in a farrago of ineptitude: copies mostly failed to get into the stores, the few that did weren't prominently displayed, and advertising was minimal. EMAP pulled the plug almost immediately.

Darling conceived *Zig Zag* as "a kind of post-punk *Q*, aimed at a lost generation who've stopped reading the music press but are still curious about what's going on." This is precisely the market envisaged by Andy McDuff for *Max*: "the 230,000 *NME* readers in 1980, who were driven away but are still around, still into music. I believe there's a huge market there, and I don't think it's going to end with *Q*, *Max* and *Select*. There's room for a couple more titles. Our research has shown that *Select* managed to pick up 80,000 readers without affecting either *Q* or the weekly music press."

Max, claims McDuff, "will be a bit more credible than *Q*. I respect *Q*, but it has become a bit cosy and safe." Like *Q*, though, *Max* will have a strong emphasis on rock history: veteran rock scribes like the legendary Nick Kent will be writing about similarly legendary bands from rock's illustrious past. "There's a lot of very young kids who want to know about The Doors and The Stones." Like *Q* and *Zig Zag*, there'll be substantial review space for reissues (back catalogue and reissues now account for a hefty proportion of record sales). And, like *Q*, *Max* will principally deal with rock as a sedentary experience, something you consume at home: its gig guide will be highly selective, and its few live reviews will be padded with backstage reportage and off-the-cuff interviews.

But for all the busy proliferation of new titles, for all the booming sales, a worrying homogeneity of approach and attitude has settled like a pall of banality over the rock press, both monthly and weekly. The music press has abandoned its pretensions of leading its readership or setting agendas, and contracted around the concept of "service": hard news, information, gossip, consumer guidance. But pretensions and pretentiousness were what gave it its edge in the first place. Furthermore, such straightforwardly efficient "service" ultimately tends to service the record business as well. The music press has abandoned its post-punk sense of antagonism towards the industry, and "wised up" to the fact that they share a common interest in sustaining a *turnover* (of happening groups, new scenes, "next big things", and general subcultural vibrancy).

Once upon a time there was a sense that, although the music papers were owned by huge corporations, the "cultural capital" of the music scene was owned by the writers and readers. The (sometimes huge) disproportion between the meaning invested by critic and fan, and the profit incurred by the record business, was where the possibility of subversion or difference resided. Nowadays, the gap between music journalism and promotion/publicity departments seems increasingly blurred and slender. For Andy Darling, "the music press is as decadent as it's ever been. It hasn't been so tied to the record industry since the early seventies." A relentless specificity has been installed, with coverage bound to release schedules, and commentary couched in language more appropriate to racing tips than art ("highly touted", "likely contenders", "one to watch"). What's been lost has been any sense of what it all adds up to, where rock is going. For all the hyperactivity, there's the dawning sense that all the motion and meaning may be going nowhere and meaning... less.

The malaise that lurks behind the apparent "health" of the music scene has everything to do with the fact that rock music is now dealt with entirely in terms of consumption. The emphasis on rock's past (encouraged by the plethora of reissues, reformations and revivalisms) further aggravates this sense that there's all this stuff to purchase, check out, get into. The rock weeklies and monthlies service a vast, amorphous constituency that shares a vague commitment to the "seriousness" and "superiority" of rock over the alleged ephemerality of pop. But they've lost sight of the upheavals (counter-culture, punk) that originally opened up the space they now occupy: upheavals that depended on a "taking things too seriously", a sense of overview, that is now almost completely marginalised.

The resurgence of rock and rock-coverage, then, is not quite the glorious resurrection it might appear. Its recovery is founded on diminished premises. The rock press has re-emerged from the trials of the eighties, older, wiser, and a lot more cautious.

Film

Lynched by the devil

Suzanne Moore asks if Lynch is possessed, blessed or just grotesque

There is no getting away from it, David Lynch is extremely good at sex and violence. No veneer of normality can hide the fact that Lynch is a singularly perverse talent, as **Wild at Heart** confirms. His urbane-spaceman persona, neatly summarised in Mel Brooks's phrase, "Jimmy Stewart from Mars", has been sketched in endless interviews. Yet, somehow no one seems able to get a handle on this ultra-nice, normal man, who nonetheless produces this incredibly weird stuff.

In refusing to analyse what he does for fear of drying up his creative process, Lynch actually gives away very little, adding cleverly to his enigmatic reputation. He is continually presented as a kind of medium through which all the weirdness and wildness of America is exposed —a man with privileged access to the unconscious. Isabella Rossellini once asked him where he got his ideas from and he replied that it was like going fishing—he never knew what he was going to catch. Hence this *idiot savant* manages the most difficult balancing act. He is at once the ultimate *auteur*, creating films that are the product of his unique imagination, yet, at the same time, he is strangely unaccountable for the content of his work.

Without a doubt, the raw power of his imagery often stuns any logical analysis. This is even more apparent in his earlier films than it is now. Currently also on show in London is *The Grandmother*, a short made in 1970, which, if any were needed, is further evidence that the guy is either possessed, blessed or just plain grotesque, depending on how you look at it. *The Grandmother* is "about" a peculiar little boy abused by his barking (literally) mad, mutant parents, and who grows an ideal grandmother in his room. The turd-like tree on his bed that he waters every day opens up like a giant birth canal to produce this old lady. Mixed with equally bizarre animation, it is impossible to translate these extraordinary images into anything that makes sense. Rather you have to sink into their terrible dream logic and wonder how Lynch ever got the money to make another film without being locked up.

Could anyone have predicted that 20 years later he would be there at Cannes, that bemused expression on his face and Ingrid Bergman's daughter by his side, receiving the prize for the best film of the festival? Yet, *Wild at Heart* is, in its way, as extraordinary as *The Grandmother*. And the Cannes award is not the only sign that Lynch has arrived; there is the

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Wild at heart: Rossellini as Perdita, complete with blonde wig and Frida Kahlo eyebrows

lazy way that his films have now become the yardstick of the bizarre—thus any movie that is slightly unconventional is tagged on film posters as being "reminiscent of David Lynch".

While Lynch dubs himself correctly as a surrealist, it is a surrealism that is born specifically of modern America rather than classical Europe. Which is why it looks so unlike anything we are used to. On the surface, *Wild at Heart* is a road movie and a love story. Based on Barry Gifford's novel, it's the story of Sailor and Lula, a young couple madly in love who are pursued by Lula's monster of a mother and various hitmen. The film contrasts the innocence of the central couple with the corruption all around them, including a devastating Willem Dafoe as villain Bobby Peru, and Diane Ladd as Lula's psychotic mom. And not even David Lynch could make a self-respecting road movie without Harry Dean Stanton.

In making a road movie, however, Lynch sacrifices one of his skills—the ability to create and get underneath the skin of just one locale (small-town America in *Blue Velvet*, the industrial wastelands of *Eraserhead*). *Wild at Heart* suffers from this; at times it is incoherent, various plot lines petering out along the way. Tales of cuts and re-cuts after test screenings abound. The result may not be more than the sum of its parts, but it is the performance of its parts that holds the whole thing together.

Laura Dern as sex-kitten Lula and Nicholas Cage as Sailor exist in a bubble. Yet isn't that what being in love feels like? Dern may be writhing orgasmically every few minutes but she is even more of an innocent than Sandy in *Blue Velvet*. Cage, in his snakeskin jacket, is both a parody and a homage to Elvis. The two lovers swap their dumb lines with overwhelming intensity, as all lovers do.

The underbelly of society, which is Lynch's other forte, is more purely evil than ever. Does anyone produce more horrific baddies than Lynch? Apart from the reptilian Dafoe, there is Isabella Rossellini in blonde wig and Frida Kahlo eyebrows as Perdita, his girlfriend, and a genuinely disturbing murder scene. Most frightening of all is Diane Ladd smearing herself with lipstick like blood. These characters are drenched in sex and death. One rarely occurs in a Lynch film without the other. But if we are to believe in his talent for dipping into the collective unconscious, we can scarcely demand sanitised sexual politics with it—or can we? It's not that Lynch should be let off the hook but in this film, if not in *Blue Velvet*, the men may be slimy bastards but the women are evil too.

These performances are multi-layered, heightened, expressionistic to the point of hysteria

Though all the familiar Lynch cartoon pychoanalytic themes may be here, what Lynch demonstrates once more in *Wild at Heart* is that he is one of the few directors working with actors who shy away from the straitjacket of naturalism. These performances are multi-layered, heightened, expressionistic to the point of hysteria. Funny, terrifying and embedded in cinema culture itself. Few films achieve this quality—perhaps only Jack Nicholson's frantic efforts in *Batman*. But this is not a self-referential cynicism, it is a reflection of Lynch's belief in cinema as cinema, its very ability to be larger than life.

Likewise, his use of music, especially popular songs—*Wild at Heart* moves between fifties rock'n'roll and heavy metal—is central. These songs do not just form a soundtrack, but are key moments in any Lynch film—moments of intense purity. Lynch's use of pop songs is never camp or kitsch or even parodic. He really believes in the ability of popular culture to move people. To be *meaningful* not in relation to anything else, but to be meaningful, in and of, itself. Sentiment without sentimentality. Oddly, the person this reminds me of is our very own Dennis Potter, whom Lynch plans to work with on a film of D M Thomas's *The White Hotel*. What these masters of the unconscious will make of the story is anyone's guess. With the acclaimed TV series, *Twin Peaks*, about to be shown, Lynch must be more than happy.

Indeed, the ending of *Wild at Heart* is an assertion of love, and, throughout, the film is dotted with references to *The Wizard of Oz*. That is entirely fitting—I can think of no film that frightened me more as a child. As adults we tend to forget that Dorothy's adventure was not a delightful dream but the result of being ill. In her hallucinations everything was the same but slightly different—brighter, bigger, stranger—as it took on the perfect symmetry of delirium. This other place, as Lynch reminds us, *does* exist. Not somewhere over the rainbow but right here.

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Museums

The future of the past?

John Carswell on the future of the Kuwait Museum

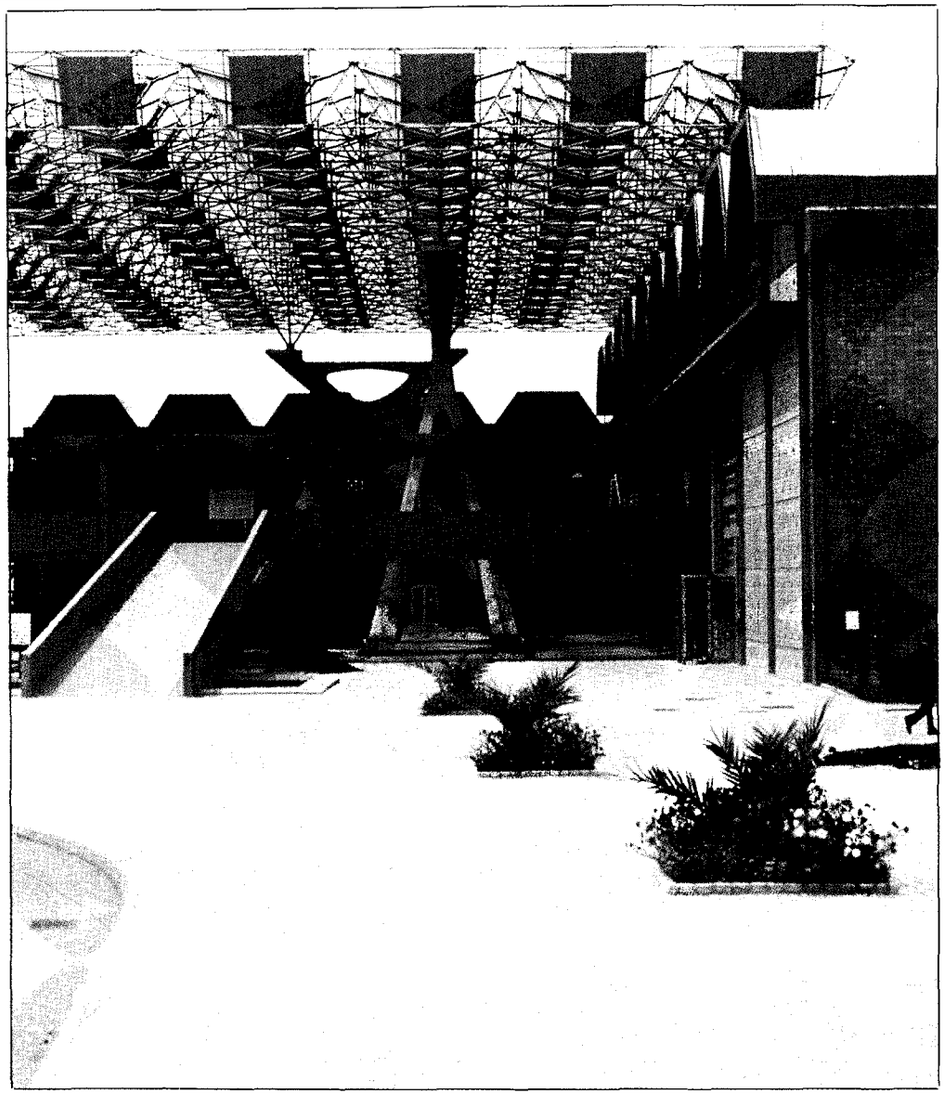
When the war in Lebanon was at its height, the Director of Antiquities, Emir Maurice Chehab, found himself in the unenviable position of living above the National Museum, exactly halfway between the Christian and Muslim sectors. After removing the more portable treasures to an undisclosed location, he then contacted the militias of both sides to request that they fire to the left or right of the building, but not directly at it. After all, he argued, it did not matter particularly who won, but Lebanon's national heritage belonged to everybody.

Recent events in Kuwait have led many concerned scholars to wonder what has happened to the most spectacular collection of Islamic art assembled in our time. Created by Arabs for the Arabs, and the Islamic world in general, it was put together by Sheikh Nasser al-Sabah and his dedicated wife, Sheikha Hussa, during the past decade. Housed in the National Museum in Kuwait, on the city's waterfront, it

Works of art have always been regarded as the legitimate spoils of war; so were craftsmen

was a model of modern museum technology and display. It is ironic that only weeks ago the museum was host to a selection of treasures of Islamic art from the Hermitage, skilfully negotiated by Sheikha Hussa with the Soviet authorities, a visible demonstration of *glasnost* in the Arab world. Luckily, the Soviet loans, and a selection of material from the Kuwait Museum for exhibition in the Soviet Union and the United States, had already been shipped from Kuwait before the present conflict began.

There has been much speculation about the remaining artefacts in the museum, all too easily vulnerable to looting and destruction. Carefully assembled over a number of years, the collection covers the whole history of Islamic art, with magnificent examples of inlaid metalwork, ceramics, glass and crystal, carpets and textiles, wood and carved stone. Nor was this simply an élitist museum; there was a lively educational programme aimed at all levels of society, from schoolchildren to adults. It was, in fact, the only museum of its kind in the Islamic world, an admirable example of private patronage for the public good.



Kuwait Museum: what will happen to the most spectacular collection of Islamic art?

Set within the larger framework of the Middle East, the fate of the Kuwait Museum has some interesting precedents. Works of art have always been regarded as the legitimate spoils of war, as were craftsmen. Timur conquered much of the Islamic world in the 14th century, and thousands of artists were shipped to Samarkand. Much the same thing happened in Ottoman times, and many of the Chinese porcelains and celadons (with the characteristic pale-green glaze) in the Topkapi Saray Palace were brought to Istanbul in the early 16th century not from the Far East but from Egypt and Syria, as a result of Selim I's campaigns.

In later Ottoman times, classical antiquities from Syria and cuneiform (inscribed) tablets from Mesopotamia were all hauled back to Istanbul. When the frontiers were redrawn after the first world war, the famous Graeco-Roman mosaics in the museum in Antioch, once in Syria, were ceded to Turkey.

More recently, the Israelis exercised a major coup when they annexed the Palestine Archaeological Museum in Jerusalem in 1967, with its unique collection of antiquities from the prehistoric period onwards, and, more importantly, the bulk of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The museum was created during the Mandate, and governed by an international board of trustees; the Jordanians made a tactical error by nationalising it in 1966, leaving the way open for the Israelis to occupy it after the Six-Day War, with no redress to international opinion.

The French legacy in Syria included a magnificent National Museum in Damascus, which has been capably run by the Syrians since 1946, along with an efficient Archaeological Service, remarkable for its lack of chauvinism and willingness to cooperate with foreign institutions. Further afield, in the sixties, the British acquired a significant collection of South Arabian antiquities in Aden, and before they left actually got as far as designing a new museum to house them. What happened to this collection under the new regime is unclear, but a number of eminent Soviet scholars have been working with great success in South Yemen and Socotra in the past few years.

From which one might conclude, like the Emir Maurice, that the past belongs to everybody, but not to everybody at the same time. As far as Kuwait is concerned, one would hope that Iraq's own scholars would step in to prevent any major damage, but this may not be high on Saddam Hussein's list of priorities.

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Music

Rigging rhythms

Roderic Dunnett profiles composer James MacMillan

James MacMillan seems unstoppable. His recent success at the Proms, hard on the heels of the Edinburgh performance of his dramatic music theatre work *Busqueda*, a protest against Central and South American right-wing oppression, merely confirms the growing perception of this young Scotsman as not merely something of a cult figure, but one of the most interesting figures on the British contemporary music scene.

This unlikely, quiet-spoken character got started when his grandfather (a former Scottish miner) urged him to join a local colliery band. He remains, like many west-coast Catholics of Irish extraction, a staunch supporter of Celtic FC. Already in the public eye, MacMillan is now to be featured composer at next month's *Musica Nova* festival in Glasgow, which will present a complete overview of his work to date, including the world premier of a new piano concerto, provocatively entitled *The Berserking*, (a "Berserker" means a kind of tanked-up Celtic and Viking warrior), written for Peter Donohoe and the Scottish National Orchestra and, as MacMillan points out, gently parodying "Scotland's ability to shoot itself in the foot" in the political and other fields.

His fused Gaelic loyalties may account for MacMillan's fierce support of left-wing nationalist and internationalist causes: a fan of groups like Talking Heads or Simple Minds, he is, unsurprisingly, no ardent Thatcherite. Rather, he fulminates unashamedly against nuclear power, or what he calls the "detested" poll tax. Espousing Marxist views at college, he developed passionate interests in liberation theology and in the wider cause of social justice. All of which figure as recurring strands in his music.

Now just 31, the prolific MacMillan belongs to a generation that has gained a decisive say in the direction British music is presently taking. Perhaps able to stand back and view postwar musical development dispassionately, this age group has had the chance to absorb, make sense of and twist to its own purposes, sometimes overtly pilfering from, a wide range of influences.

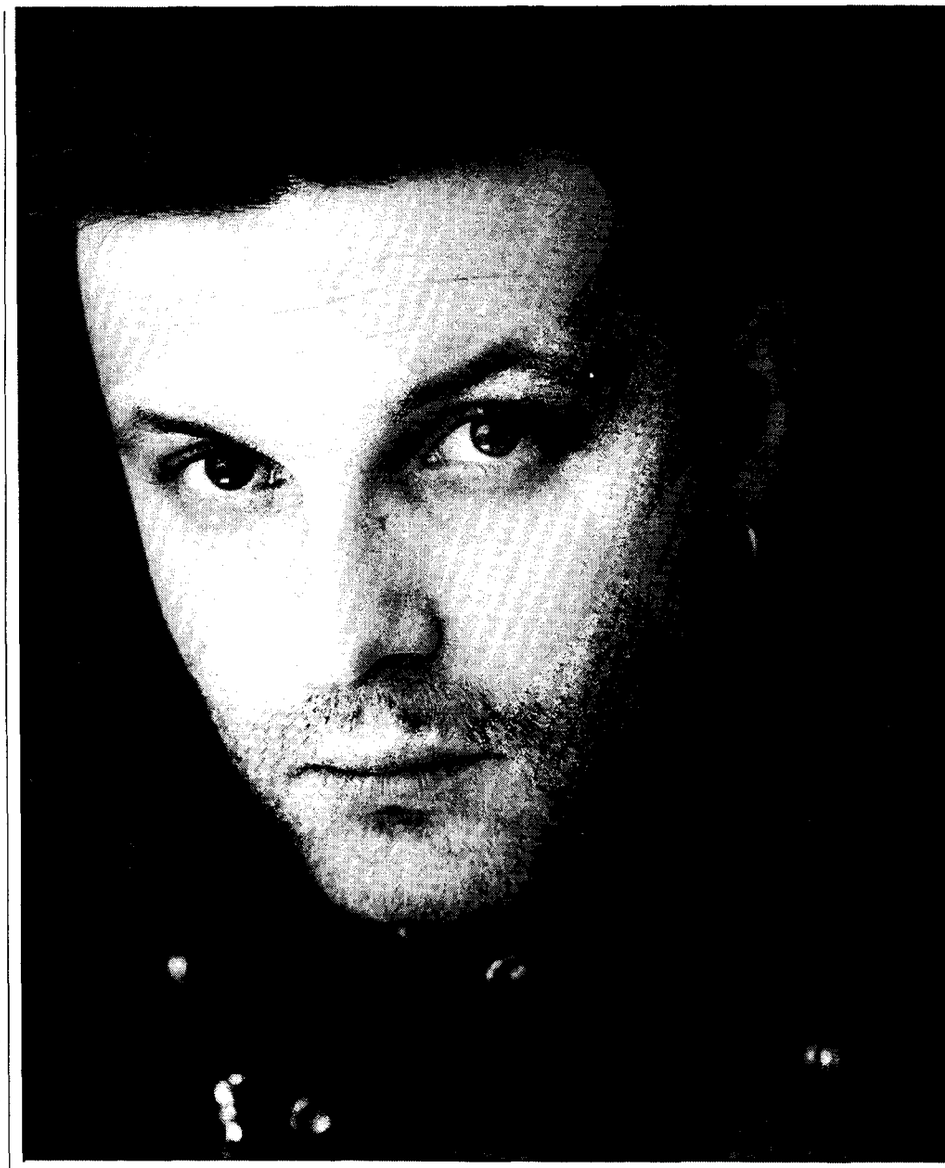
For most young composers, turning away from the more strictly organised serialism of Boulez and Webern, the alternative influences of Bartok and Stravinsky have been helpful. The last has been particularly important in MacMillan's writing, which often displays a comparable rhythmic vitality and dramatic energy.

He and his contemporaries swing with remarkable stylistic ease from classical to revivalist folk or rock, from oriental or Caribbean input to the wilder electronic efforts of Stockhausen and Berio. This sometimes influences their choice of structures, but is most obvious in its effect on rhythms—their work positively pulsates with patterns which range from steel band or reggae, via tunes which might serve as a Swapo or Sandinista national anthem to the more dervish-like efforts of Bartok quartets or *The Rite of Spring* and later Stravinsky.

Over the last three or four years MacMillan has begun to evolve his own, more "authentic" voice. Only just old enough to recall the fall of Allende, he was profoundly affected, like many of his generation, by the spectacle of contemporary events in South America, Nicaragua and El Salvador. His capacity for sharp social comment is strongly articulated in *Cantos Sagrados*, a setting of Chilean and Guatemalan texts, and *The Exorcism of Rio Sumpul*, whose powerful launch-pad was a devastating attack by Salvadorean helicopters on one of that country's remote villages.

One of his most startling achievements is the music theatre work, *Busqueda*, recently performed in Edinburgh. The piece is named after the Oxford-based human rights organisation: the word "*busqueda*" means "search". In it, MacMillan starkly sets beside sections from the Latin Ordinary of the Mass a handful of poems composed for the protest group's weekly meetings in Buenos Aires, attended by the mothers of the *desparecidos*—those who disappeared amid the military's brutalities of the mid-seventies. *Busqueda's* grief and intensity recalls the most powerful of Lorca's poetry: many people directly affected by those horrors were profoundly moved on a first hearing.

Even in his valuable work with children, James MacMillan's simmering passions where any kind of injustice arises are rarely far below the surface. He remains a gadfly, deeply committed to exposing cant, cruelty and hypocrisy wherever he identifies it. This cheerful thorn in the establishment's side looks set to be around for a good while yet.



James MacMillan: redirecting British music

Forthcoming performances of James MacMillan's music include: Two Visions of Hoy (17 September); The Exorcism of Rio Sumpul (19 September); Cantos Sagrados (21 September); Tryst and Piano Concerto (world premier) (both 22 September)—all part of Musica Nova Festival, Glasgow.

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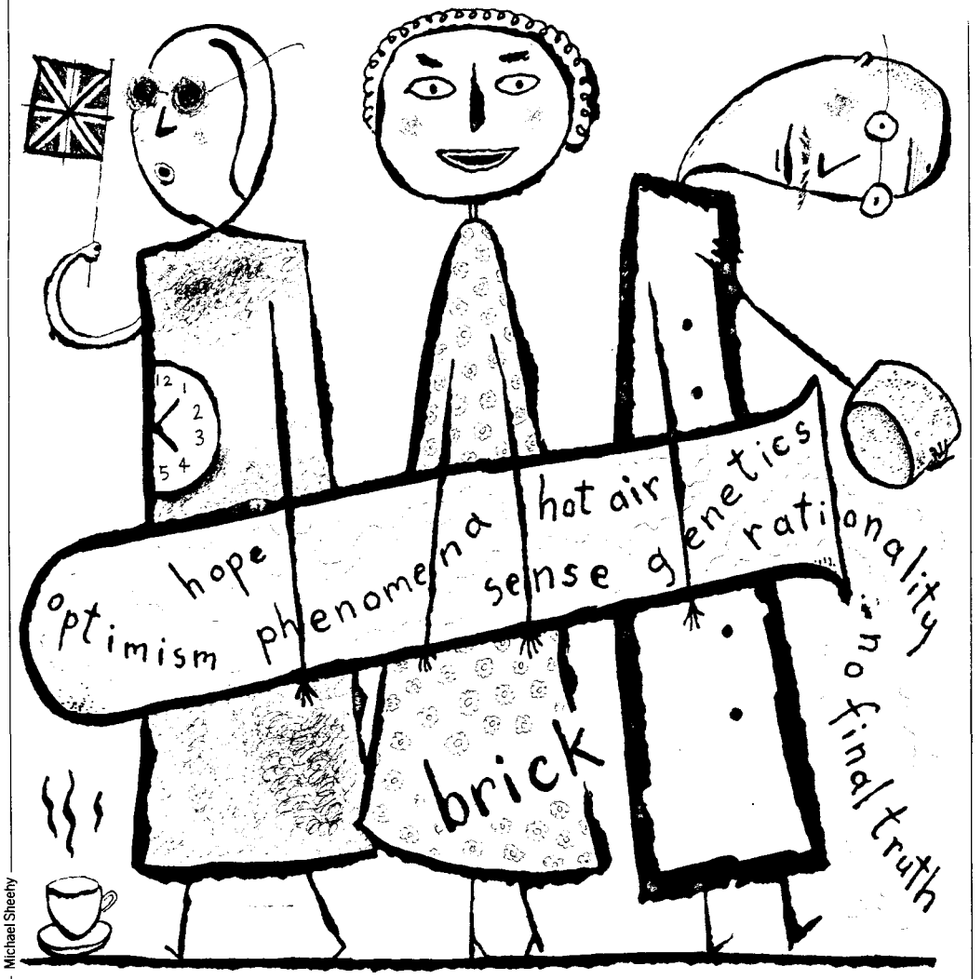

Michael Sheehy

View from the lab

THE THREAT AND THE GLORY: REFLECTIONS ON SCIENCE AND SCIENTISTS
Peter Medawar
Oxford University Press £15
A VERY DECIDED PREFERENCE
Jean Medawar
Oxford University Press £15

Jenny Diski

From the collection of mostly unpublished writings in *The Threat and the Glory*, and from his wife's memoir of her life with him, the late Peter Medawar emerges as a certain man inhabiting a certain world. The word *sanguine* crops up frequently in his writings, most notably in his description of the main quality needed by a scientist: "A sanguine temperament that expects to be able to solve a problem..."

By the end of his life in 1987, Medawar had been loaded with honours: as a scientist, he first received the Nobel prize for his discovery of the immunological basis for the rejection of donated skin grafts, and then the Presidency of the Royal Society; as an administrator, he was knighted and awarded the Order of Merit. He was the voice of the scientific establishment, and the tone of that voice was that of a member of the establishment, aware of potential problems but confident that all would be well.

"We do not always produce sensible ideas," he says of those doing science. "But on the whole scientists have undergone a discipline, perhaps an over-discipline, which ensures that their computers are working pretty efficiently, and they tend to have reasonably sensible ideas to account for the phenomena that they are trying to describe." He had very little time for the alarmists who push worst-case scenarios on to a gullible public.

In the several papers on genetic engineering, he assures us, in lucid and magisterial prose, that we have little to worry about. Scientific research is overseen by politicians and grant-giving bodies who act as brakes on the wilder fantasies of gene manipulation. It is true, he says, that most of the committees consist of scientists, but "if one mad scientist is rare, a committee of scientists, all mad, is very much more improbable still." The public, he says, are dupes, and deserve nothing but contempt for listening to the panic-mongers. The fact is that, apart from the difficulty of finding funds for the crazy end of genetic research, such activities as cloning, while not impossible, are scientifically hopelessly impractical. Only an unlikely combination of mad scientists, politicians and administrators could put such experimentation into action.

Medawar's position as a scientist and a rational optimist stemmed from his belief in the philosophy of Karl Popper, who has an article to himself and crops up in several others. For Popper (and Medawar) there is no final truth to be found; there can only be hypotheses that have not yet been falsified. Present truths are no more than current opinion ready to be overturned, and from this Medawar concludes that there is reason for hope: if we know that we are likely to be in error, we can identify and learn from our mistakes and do better next time.

It is a civilised view that ought to allow both science and society to proceed with humility and humanity, but I can't say I share Medawar's faith in the overall sanity of the human race. During his lifetime entire populations have been in the thrall of politicians, scientists and administrators whose judgments could not be called human, let alone sane.

History teaches us, and the present appears to be teaching us still, that wise counsels are often rendered dumb in the face of the determined aggression of powerful, irrational leaders and their advisers. If sanity and rationality win in the end, it is often at a terrible cost; and, moreover, since the end hasn't come, it might be a little premature to judge this the best of all possible worlds.

There is very little room for speculation in Medawar's world of orderly, rational science. What he calls *hot air* or *metaphysics* belongs to another discourse. He refers to a happy typing error of Paul Jennings who wrote *bunkrapt* for *bankrupt*. "Everybody needs to be bunkrapt, and I prefer to be bunkrapt by listening to Wagner's music dramas or reading Tolkien's novels. It must not spill over into science." It may be that he's right, but if he is, I'm sorry about it; I'd like to think that the scientific and speculative were not two entirely separate fields of human striving; one serious, the other entertainment.

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Jean Medawar's book is a homage rather than a biography. She describes her life with her husband and their struggle against the effects of several strokes that increasingly handicapped the last 20 years of his life. At the end she acknowledges "that our outlook may seem unbelievable to modern couples. Feminists will probably find our attitudes to marriage peculiar." She is referring to her devoted attentions to her husband's needs both before and after his illness.

Though they were both students at Oxford, Jean Medawar was dazzled by her brilliant fellow-undergraduate. Later, when they were newly married, she once objected to his excessive hours in the lab. His response was, "You have first claim on my love, but not on my time." She explains: "It would probably have been a good idea to have pointed out that love needs time-sharing, but I didn't. I knew already that his passionate, questing behaviour in research needed a great deal of time and thought, and when I learnt more about his research, I came not to grudge the time, and he was grateful."

Later, after his stroke, when he had lost the use of one side of his body, she looked after him, becoming nurse, companion and personal assistant. Medawar took her with him on lecture tours, introducing her to fellow scientists "apologetically, 'She's my left leg, you know.'"

She describes a deep commitment to a brave and clever man whose intellectual life was not necessarily lived at home. That is neither unbelievable nor peculiar.

It is, however, a description of a life which, even at its most testing, is embedded in a privileged, middle-class Englishness where many assumptions and expectations, both scientific and social, are clear and unquestioned. Jean Medawar's book and some of Peter Medawar's writings make difficult reading if you happen to have a taste for a more hesitant, less certain view of the world.

On the road to nowhere

THE BIG WHEEL
Bruce Thomas
Viking £12.99

Sean French

Years before he became a saint, Bob Geldof was asked why he had gone into the rock and roll business: "For the knobbing," was his uncompromising reply. There are one or two of the more staid bands who bring their families on the road with them but, in general, rock and roll tours are like what you would expect when adolescent, or overgrown adolescent, boys are given access to money, drugs and girls—an unending package holiday with Bacchanalian orgies thrown in.

Elvis Costello once confessed that though it was assumed—because of their slightly upmarket reputation—that he and his band, The Attractions, behaved better than the run of rock musicians, at their nadir they were just as bad, or even worse. So a book about life on the road by the bassist of The Attractions, who broke up three years ago, will be grabbed with some eagerness by the *cognoscenti*—or rather those who wish they were *cognoscenti*.

Admittedly there are problems. The author's biography reveals that Thomas is currently pursuing "interests in the martial arts, shamanism and Tibetan music". Neither The Attractions nor Elvis Costello is ever identified by name in the book but simply referred to as the Singer or the Keyboard Player. And towards the end he starts writing prose reminiscent of the sort of thing John Peel used to write in alternative magazines on multicoloured paper in the late sixties: "From here I could burst through the well-spring of life, helter-skelter round coils of DNA. I could accelerate towards the distant constellations or sink into the unimaginable vastness and boundless energy of the sea..." Yes, but tell us about the groupies.

If I had read this book when I was 14 I would have found the life it described almost unbearably enticing. Certainly, much of the behaviour manifested on The Attractions' tours reminds me of one of my boys-only school outings, with just a bit of money and drugs added.

Thomas is constantly funny, but he is particularly good on the sheer boredom of a tour, the frustration of seeing a country only through a coach window while travelling an impossibly long distance for a concert. He's also good on the paradox of the sort of adulation that band members experience: "After the show there'd be hundreds of excited people milling around, trying to see us for one reason or another."

Thomas also describes, with ghastly vividness, his early days as a struggling impoverished musician; and the sad subtext of the book is the revelation of how little success satisfied him during the years he enjoyed it. Mindless hedonism has its place, but as the first and greatest pop star, Lord Byron, observed, the sword eventually outwears the sheath. In the current state of the human body and the technology that keeps it going, the sex and drugs and rock and roll existence can only be sustained for a limited period: beyond that you die, go mad, retire, become poor and obscure, or become rich, healthy and puritanical.

This is an uneven book, but it is saved by its refusal to be constrained by the absurd old rock and roll myths and by the sense of ironic pessimism that permeates Thomas's memories. There were also the nights when it was all worth it (a couple of which I have been present at): "There were some nights when everything went with that effortless kind of swing that requires a certain kind of effort to allow. Nights like those were never the same and could not be repeated; they contained a feeling of being a spectator as well as a participant."

This is a book that all melancholy, middle-aged hippies with receding hairlines and increasingly unplayed record collections should steal.

Woman of consequence

MRS HUMPHREY WARD: EMINENT VICTORIAN, PRE-EMINENT EDWARDIAN
John Sutherland
Oxford University Press £16.95

Zoë Heller

When Mrs Humphrey Ward died in 1920, Buckingham Palace sent a note of condolence to her family. Their majesties were sure that Mrs Ward's "distinguished literary achievements" and "her philanthropic activities" would "endear her memory to the hearts of English-speaking people". A week later, Virginia Woolf noted the death in her diary. Her remarks on the deceased were a little less flowery: "It appears she was merely a woman of straw after all —shovelled into the grave and already forgotten."

On one point, it is hard to argue with Woolf: Mrs Ward *was* rapidly forgotten. Seventy years after her death, the prodigious good works go uncelebrated and the novels that once made her the highest-paid woman in England go largely unread. What may be challenged, however, is the "woman of straw" tag. John Sutherland's lively, intelligent biography does not flinch from the disagreeable aspects of its subject, but it won't stand for Woolf's dismissive insolence. Mrs Ward may have been a snob, an incurable prig and, in later life, a political reactionary; but she was also tough, talented and frighteningly energetic.

She was born an Arnold—the granddaughter of Dr Thomas Arnold of Rugby. Immense pride in the family name helped bowdlerise her recollections of childhood, but her early years—spent mostly at low-grade boarding schools —seem to have been pretty miserable. One of the chief miseries was that her father never visited her and rarely wrote. She adored him, in spite of his scandalous conversion to Roman Catholicism, but he didn't adore her back. This unreciprocated ardour was later succeeded by an exaggerated reverence for various *grands hommes*: Pattison, Gladstone and Henry James were just a few of those in whom the neglected daughter sought a surrogate daddy.

Her husband might have been the patriarchal figure to fulfil her needs, but Humphrey, art critic for *The Times*, was never tough enough or high-powered enough for that. From the start, Mrs Ward was the emotional backbone of the Ward partnership; after the success of her second novel, *Robert Elsmere* (a great, three-volume tome about Christian faith and rational scepticism), she became the financial backbone too. Later, when Humphrey began to speculate unsuccessfully in the art market and her son Arnold became addicted to gambling, it was Mrs Ward's writing alone that kept the wolf —and the bailiffs—from the door.

The family's need for cash ended up being the primary motive for grinding out the novels

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—over 25 of them in all. But at the beginning of her writing career, it was less money than status that motivated Mrs Ward. She wanted to do credit to her paternal ancestry; she wanted to be a mover and shaker. To this end she became not only a novelist, but also a dedicated campaigner and polemicist.

Eager to advance women's education, she co-founded Somerville Hall, Oxford's first non-denominational, women's college. Her feminism had distinct limits, however, and in 1908 she protested against female hubris by founding the Anti-Suffrage League. She set up a range of social services—adult education centres, children's play-groups and schools for the physically handicapped. In addition, she wrote articles, pamphlets and letters about the Irish question, religion, the Boer war, tariff reform, Oscar Wilde's immorality, Zola's naturalism—and, as they say, much, much more. There were, it seems, few major contemporary issues on which Mrs Ward did *not* record an opinion.

This must occasionally have been tedious for family and friends, but it makes for a wonderfully absorbing biography. This book does not necessarily endear Mrs Ward to our English-speaking hearts, but it does rather put Virginia Woolf in her place. Mrs Ward, Sutherland shows, was a woman of considerable consequence, not straw.

An absence of volition

BRIEF LIVES
Anita Brookner
Jonathan Cape £12.95

Patricia Craig

Brief Lives hardly seems the most appropriate title for a work in which the central characters, including the narrator, reach a ripe old age, and in which the ingredients of these lives are recounted at some length. The novel looks back over a good many unexhilarating years, and calls up a mood of melancholy tinged with mellowness, and of resignation. It's about a couple of marriages, social obligations, and unrewarding friendship, widowhood and the process of ageing. This is Anita Brookner's tenth novel, and her approach is, as ever, graceful and fastidious; but we miss a certain quirkiness and high spirits which enlivened her earliest books. *Brief Lives* is low-spirited.

Brookner's narrator, Fay Dodworth, or Fay Langdon, is a widow with an exceedingly limited circle of acquaintances, who recalls her uneventful childhood in Camberwell, her short career as a singer of romantic songs during the forties or fifties, and her marriage to the handsome, charming, but somehow shadowy Owen Langdon, who removes himself from his wife altogether, in middle age, by dying in a car crash in France. Fay's life seems to move from one phase of ennui to another; the death of her husband is followed by a not very full-blooded affair, and in due course a death cuts short that tentative alliance too.

Fay's circle consists of unoccupied women, only one of whom, an impossible ex-celebrity named Julia Morton, is at all forceful in character; the rest are mainly Julia's acolytes, her mother (before old age and an old people's home lay claim to her), her one-time dresser, an unappetising female called Maureen who came to interview Julia for a local paper, and stayed on for 20 years to do the chores.

Julia's husband Charlie and Fay's husband Owen were business associates, and somehow the women's relationship survives the deaths of both these unobtrusive men, though they don't much like each other, and indeed have discordant personalities. Fay comes to visit Julia bearing gifts of food which are ill appreciated (just as similar gifts to her mother-in-law were annoyingly undervalued), lacking the gumption to initiate a break—"there was in me an absence of volition which made me an easy prey for characters stronger than myself."

An absence of volition—this is indeed a novel in which things tend to drift or fade, rather than being willed into a particular form; and in which the only horror—attributed to one of the characters—is "a horror... of anything less than perfect manners". (Oddly enough, it's the husband of rude Julia who feels like this.) Anita Brookner is a novelist of considerable poise and integrity, and she has made herself something of a specialist in intricate feelings, and in the shortcomings of life, as opposed to some world of delusion, whether it's the world of literature, or—as in *Brief Lives*—the enticing nonsense purveyed in certain Hollywood romances in the poignant songs of the 1940s. But her plots seem to be coming ever more attenuated, and consequently less absorbing.

The ballad of Ewan MacColl

JOURNEYMAN: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY
Ewan MacColl
Sidgwick & Jackson £16.95

Albert Hunt

If all this book contained were the chapter on radio ballads, it would still be necessary to buy, borrow or steal a copy. The radio ballads belong to history now. But when they were first invented—can it really have been more than 30 years ago?—they added a new dimension to British radio.

The first of them came about almost by accident. The BBC producer Charles Parker asked Ewan MacColl, in the autumn of 1957, to write a radio feature about a Stockport railwayman, who had died trying to keep control of his runaway goods train when the brakes failed. In those days, you went out, did your research, and then wrote a script for BBC actors to speak. But this time, as MacColl puts it, "it didn't work out like that."

He and Charles Parker went out and they recorded 40 hours of railwaymen and their families talking. When MacColl listened to the tapes, he realised that he couldn't write as well as people talked. So he selected bits of speech for editing and wrote some songs to go with the speech. Peggy Seeger composed a musical accompaniment, and Charles Parker edited it all together, using scissors and a razor blade.

It sounds simple, but nobody had done it before. And the complexities of editing tape which had been recorded at different speeds, using only single-track recorders, are unimaginable today. When *The Ballad of John Axon* was first broadcast, the *Observer* reviewer said that "radio kaleidoscopy" would never be the same again, and it wasn't. MacColl vividly recaptures the excitement of discovering a new form. His detailed account of the making of the third radio ballad, *Singing the Fishing*, is a joy to read. It makes you want to rush out with your video camera.

The rest of the book, though, is a curious mixture. The first half consists of impressionistic descriptions of Ewan MacColl's childhood and adolescence in the slums of Salford in the early thirties. "Should the autobiography seem to the reader like fiction or non-fiction?" asks Peggy Seeger in an understandably personal introduction (MacColl had been, she tells us, her "lover-workmate" for 30 years).

To this reader, the early sections of the book, particularly those that deal at length with MacColl's sexual explorations, seem like fiction. This isn't to say they're untrue—only that I felt I'd encountered them before in novels, plays and films. I was waiting for the war to begin. How had he, I wondered, as a militant anti-Fascist young communist, coped with the Nazi-Soviet pact? Had he shared the experiences he sang about in those superb recordings of soldiers' songs? Was there any truth in the story that he'd been thown in the guardroom at Catterick for singing "They browned me off to help to save democracy" in front of the officers at a camp concert? Alas, the war only features in this book as a blank page between two chapters about his work with Joan Littlewood.

He does less than justice to the later work of Joan Littlewood, after he'd drifted away from Theatre Workshop. It didn't change British theatre, he says. "Other nations have produced a theatre of cruelty, a theatre of the absurd. We have produced a theatre of dullness." He's right, of course, but Littlewood, to borrow his words, "made her mark" on the working lives of a lot of people. Watching a show I'd helped to make recently, in the Vickers town of Barrow-in-Furness, I found myself thinking how much it owed to Littlewood.

The epilogue of this book, which MacColl finished only a few months before he died last October, reads like an elegy of all the people who made their mark on his youth—Jock Sinclair, who used to recite "Tam O'Shanter", his Aunt Mag, who used to hurl abuse at rent and debt collectors, Nellie Wallace and Blondie, the

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mill-girls who taught his street theatre group, The Red Megaphones, what it was like in the mill.

Ewan MacColl, too, made his mark on a lot of people. This book will be welcome alongside his recordings (a selection of which will be released by Cooking Vinyl under the title *Black and White* in October).

Ladies of the manor

THE WOMAN'S DOMAIN: WOMEN AND THE ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE
Trevor Lummis and Jan Marsh
Viking £16.99

Lucasta Miller

If a woman's place is historically in the home, the home deserves an important place in women's history. We can infer a lot about our cultural and social past from the architecture and decoration of houses, and from the economic and family relationships of those who lived in them. Trevor Lummis and Jan Marsh have taken seven National Trust houses and, tracing the history of their occupants, have focused on the contributions made by individual women to the social and aesthetic organisation of their households.

As a book aimed primarily at the average National Trust visitor, *The Woman's Domain* is frustratingly short on high-powered historical analysis. It is more a set of middle-brow memoirs than a sustained argument with a thesis to prove, so my criticism may be unfair. But too often the most interesting bits are cut off before they've been properly explored.

We learn, for example, that servants became more and more "invisible" from the 16th century onwards, eventually being relegated to separate quarters, entrances and staircases. Why? What does this tell us about changing *mentalités*? Similarly, "the part played by upper-class women in demonstrating their husband's [*sic*] wealth through conspicuous consumption" is mentioned. But words and phrases are used too loosely to offer any genuine historical insights: "upper-class" is arguably an anachronism in the context of the 17th century. "Conspicuous consumption" remains an empty, unexplored cliché.

In the early chapters (the arrangement is chronological), there is a tendency to present the past with a cosy familiarity that can only ensure a superficial historical perspective. The worst offences are found in the opening section on Hardwick Hall and the Elizabethan Countess of Shrewsbury who built it. "It is unlikely," we are irrelevantly told, "that any at Hardwick were as unruly as Lady Olivia's boisterous uncle Sir Toby Belch and his friend Sir Andrew Aguecheek." This is patronising, both to the reader and to Shakespeare, and toe-curlingly twee. It is in no way relieved by the laundry-list approach to the contents of the house. But the book gets better, and the last chapter, focusing on Pauline Trevelyan, the Victorian mistress of Wallingford, paints a sympathetic and elegantly written portrait of an interesting woman who held celebrated salons, wrote for the papers, and grew guavas in her greenhouse.

One of the strongest features of this book is its use of original letters and diaries, which are quoted generously. Not surprisingly, these get more extensive, more accessible and more personal from the late 18th century onwards. Theresa Parker of Saltram, who commissioned works by Reynolds and Angelica Kauffmann, writes movingly to her brother about her newborn baby, only to die a few weeks later of puerperal fever. Emma Hamilton, pregnant and abandoned early on in her career by Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh of Uppark, pours out her desperation in atrocious spelling: "I am sure, what shall I dow, good God what shall I dow, I have wrote 7 letters and no anser... tell me what I ham to dow." Sir Harry went on to marry a teenage dairymaid when he was over 70.

The Woman's Domain has a large cast of characters, which can get a little confusing even with the family trees provided. Some of them are interesting in their own right. Many are simply representative of the world in which they lived. The authors' treatment of these characters is patchy: parts are full of anecdotal charm and real perceptive sympathy. There are also places in which the writing loses its ease, offers simplistic generalisations, and drags its feet. But it's a nicely produced book, with high-quality black-and-white photos, designed to appeal to the general (probably female) reader.

Creating facts on the West Bank

PALESTINE AND ISRAEL: A CHALLENGE TO JUSTICE
John Quigley
Duke University Press
£18 paperback/£44.40 hardback
ISRAEL, PALESTINIANS AND THE INTIFADA: CREATING FACTS ON THE WEST BANK
Geoffrey Aronson
Kegan Paul International £30
INTIFADA: THE PALESTINIAN UPRISING AGAINST ISRAELI OCCUPATION
Zachary Lockman and Joel Beinin (editors)
MERIP/I B Tauris £5.95

Kitty Warnock

"Creating facts", on the assumption that what's done is hard to undo, has been a strategy underlying Zionism from its beginning, from early illegal immigration to present plans to settle Soviet Jews in the Occupied Territories.

The extent to which this policy of creating facts succeeds is grimly told from the point of view of international law by John Quigley. With copious reference to primary and secondary sources, he traces how Zionists, at first a minority among hostile or indifferent world Jewry, repeatedly imposed their claims, their interpretations of history, morality and law, and their power, on a world which at every stage protested for a while and then gave in.

What shocks is how thoroughly Zionists won acceptance for their "facts". Even sympathisers with Palestinians may be jolted by Quigley's professorial demonstration that, based on other UN and legal judgments, Palestinians have not only the right to self-determination, but also the right to use force to achieve it, and the right to repatriation or compensation for their expulsion; while Israel has, strictly speaking, forfeited the right to membership of the United Nations. (He does not explain how it got there in the first place, given its persistent lack of respect for UN recommendations.)

Geoffrey Aronson studies the area where the tactic of creating facts without concern for their justification may have reached its limit—the Occupied Territories. Basing his narrative on the Israeli press and some interviews with Palestinian leaders, he traces a clear pattern in the development of Israeli policy towards settlement in the West Bank 1967-87: a narrow subject, but fundamental to the ideology and practice of Zionism. After 1967, Moshe Dayan, hoping the Palestinians would learn to accept their situation, set up a pragmatic system of indirect rule and "benevolent occupation" which deliberately avoided resolving the political, legal and ideological problems of military rule.

But this could not survive. On the one hand, Palestinians refused to cooperate. (Aronson's account of the logic of local reactions to Israeli policy is a valuable complement to studies of PLO policy developments outside Palestine.) On the other hand, Zionism is inherently and historically an extreme doctrine, and the rise to power of right-wing groups and the militant settlers' movement is merely consistent with the commitment to expansion.

Like Quigley, Aronson is interested in the end of obfuscation of the true nature of Zionism: the addition of the *intifada* to this second edition of his 1987 study emphasises his point. Israelis are now having to face truths that are uncomfortable for many of them: that they are led by clear-speaking extremists, and that expansion does not bring peace and security, or democracy. Aronson's pessimistic conclusion is that "South Africanisation" is well under way in Israel; but he also makes the important point that "facts" like the building of settlements are not irreversible.

Intifada is a collection of descriptive and analytical journalistic pieces, published in MERIP during the first year of the *intifada*. They cover a range of aspects, local and international, and though they are two years old the analyses offered are still valid. (Alas, little has changed since then.) Edward Said's introduction includes that best summary history of Palestine I have read, and his personal account of how the Palestine National Council made its historic decision to recognise Israel and declare Palestinian independence is in the best tradition of political memoirs.

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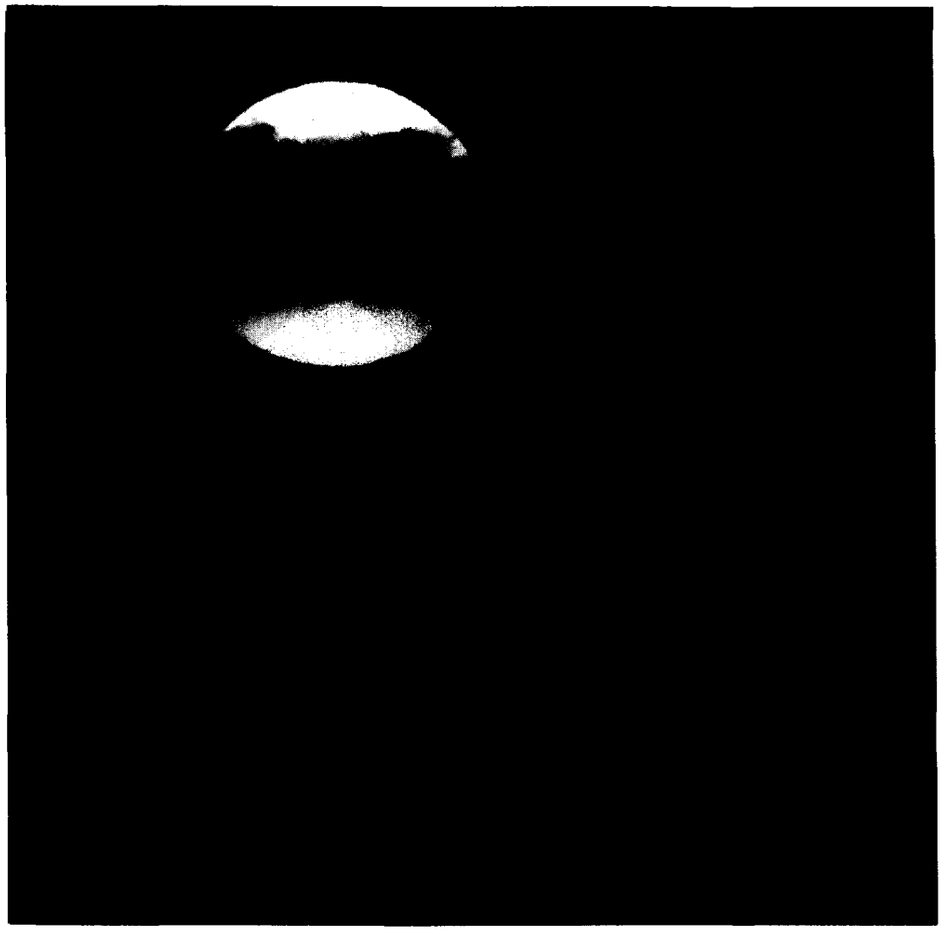

"A penance for the sins of godless, revolutionary Catalonia"—the Sagrada Familia, Gaudí's "unfinished stone forest of a church" (the photo is reproduced from David Mitchell's "Travellers in Spain: an illustrated anthology", published next month by Cassell at £14.95)

Asylum for modern times

HOMAGE TO BARCELONA
Colm Tóibín
Simon & Schuster £6.95

Boyd Tonkin

"Where ya going?" someone sings at an air-stewardess in one of those tuneless dirges that fill Stephen Sondheim musicals. "Barcelona," she drawls. And so, during the 1980s, did everyone. What Paris had once been and Prague may soon become, the Catalan capital was, and is: the "one living point of the earth" where, for fashion-conscious travellers, "modern times have found an asylum".

So wrote Le Corbusier, praising the doomed Catalan republic of the early 1930s. As Colm Tóibín, twice a resident, explains in his travelogue-cum-cultural chronicle, the city has shone as a beacon of European progress three times inside a century. First, the vain but ruthless bourgeoisie of the years after the 1888 Great Exhibition bequeathed the sinuous vegetable architecture of Gaudí and his peers. The Sagrada Familia, Gaudí's unfinished stone forest of a church, was designed as a penance for the sins of godless, révolutionary Catalonia. No wonder the anarchists burned his plans in 1936. Tóibín, his Irish eyes skinned for the symbolism of nationhood, remarks that one of the parties thrown up by the class strife and economic chaos of the 1910s called itself *Nosaltres Sols*. That is Catalan for *Sinn Fein*.

The half-decade before the Spanish civil war saw secular radicalism briefly prevail over the canny, Catholic face of Catalan identity. (This tension, which today sets socialist city hall against a centre-right Catalan government, recurs as a motif throughout this quietly learned book.) If the honeymoon of modernity had lasted, Le Corbusier and his friends might well have bulldozed much of the flowery stonework that now adorns each postcard home. But in July 1936, Pau Casals was conducting Beethoven's Ninth to open an alternative, anti-Nazi Olympic Games, when news came of Franco's uprising in Morocco. The audience fled, and the night descended. It stayed dark for 40 years.

Tóibín tells the story of that night well, if laconically. He seems to share the Catalans' enduring reticence about the Franco era. (Consider the depth of their trauma: even after a mass exodus of Republicans, 35,000 people were shot when Barcelona fell.) Much later, dictator and regime slid into senility, while the rising class sharpened its political skills in bars and clubs. In Gothic corners where backpackers now sip cocktails, a successful revolution was hatched. Evoking the transition to democracy and Catalan autonomy—more swift than most had dared to dream—Tóibín strikes the Wordsworthian gong: "Later, it would be called history, but then it was sheer joy."

Elsewhere, he delivers the standard cultural package—Picasso, Miró, Dali and the rest—with some deft personal flourishes of anecdote. He writes tenderly, and a shade earnestly, as if going native has meant picking up a touch of that dour pride that lets Catalans look down on the flamboyant machismo of the Spain beyond their gates. The legions of Andalusians and other migrants, who populate the city's raw belt of high-rise suburbs, rate a few curt paragraphs. How would Tóibín feel about a book on historic and artistic London that scanted the vast Irish working class in this way?

This snootiness makes a rare lapse in a work that otherwise shuns the vices of its genre: egomania, pedantry, trivia. It will please the first-time tripper and reward the hardened buff. What it doesn't try to define is the city's special appeal for a generation of foreign intellectuals. That would make a separate study. One suggestion, though: for them, Barcelona redeems the idea of a non-aggressive local patriotism, with cultural politics as powerhouse of a thriving civil society. A cynic might call it the dear departed GLC *in excelsis*. To visit is to join a story that, after two false dawns, has at last reached its happy ending.

Cuttings do not a country make

AMONG THE BRITISH
Richard Critchfield
Hamish Hamilton £17.99

Philip Oakes

Richard Critchfield, a veteran American journalist whose main beat has been the third world, spent a year researching this report on the state of the nation and conducted around 300 interviews in the course of his travels. He talked to the great, the good and the irrelevant, but several potential interviewees turned him down. Auberon Waugh wrote that anything he had to say on Britain would be "too frivolous". Albert Finney said he would rather devote time to his own projects, but wished him luck. Prince Charles regretted that he was not, for the time being, giving interviews, "however benign and distinguished the interviewer". Wise men, all of them. Critchfield's findings, expanded here from a survey he wrote for the *Economist*, are bland, rambling and peculiarly blinkered.

What is disconcerting is the extent of his unknowing. He visits Peter Jay, "a former British ambassador to Washington and an ex-son-in-law of former Labour Prime Minister James

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Callaghan." So far, so predictable; but wait. "What I didn't know until I got to the address was that Jay was chief aide to Robert Maxwell, the tycoon who owns everything from London's *Daily Mirror* and Macmillan to football teams." How, one wonders, could any reporter, British or American, *not* know? He is soon enlightened. Chain-smoking and ashen-faced, Jay tells him it is a bad day to call, but presses on with the interview. "Suddenly the intercom crackled on. A roaring, deafening voice practically knocked us out of our chairs. Oaths, four-letter words, threats. It could only be Robert Maxwell..." In an instant Critchfield was offered an insight into the state of Britain, or at least British newspapers. A useful window, one would suppose. But he ignores it.

For the most part, he dwells on Britain after the end of empire, uncertain of its world role, still in the hands of the Oxbridge élite and riven by class ("as deeply a part of the English psyche as the saloon bar and public bar that divide every English pub," he notes with stunning originality). He consults David Owen ("the fallen prince") and Norman Tebbit, who exults to see "those kids from the East End who've become yuppies and got their Porsches, upsetting their elders and betters from the upper classes". He decides that, maybe, we'll pull through if we learn from the Japanese and contrive to become the workshop of Europe, using coal again when North Sea oil runs out.

The errors are legion (Peregrine Worsthorne is made editor of the *Daily Telegraph*; the actress Rudi Davis becomes "Ruby"; he generously invents a Church of Wales). I won't go on. When the tally passed 30 I stopped counting. Critchfield loves us dearly, but the country he describes is a cuttings job, composed of stereotypes and misconceptions. It is difficult to conceive how anyone mapping Britain in the eighties could fail to mention such social landmarks as Band Aid, Greenham Common, the Stalker affair and the homeless whose cardboard shanties encrust the capital. They shaped the decade, for good and ill, but Critchfield refers to none of them.

"Britain can have just as great a future as it has a past," he concludes. On the evidence that he offers it's hard to take the man seriously.

Facing redundancy

INSIDE THE BRITISH ARMY
Antony Beevor
Chatto & Windus £17.99

Jim Badger

I can sympathise with Antony Beevor's initial reluctance to undertake the writing of this book. The British army is a strange organisation and, as an ex-cavalry officer, he must have been tempted to approach his sprawling subject with either detached amusement or retrospective disdain. He lapses into neither; consequently the book is one for the connoisseur. Though the too-imposing red cover had me standing to attention, he has handled his charge with the care of a doting dad.

He tells the story of the British army as it is today and, more importantly, analyses its fears in the hope that something more suitable to the country's current needs will emerge as a result.

He painstakingly records every aspect of service life, whether it be that of the raw recruits "with their shorn heads giving them the vulnerable air of eagle chicks", or the, to me, unfathomable workings of the Ministry of Defence. He examines the role of the individual from basically trained private through to field marshal; and it is obvious, from the thoroughness of his work, that he was given an almost total freedom in his search for a balanced approach.

When he moves from the individuals to the organisation, his comments reflect the growing concern of all ranks: times are changing and therefore the army must change too; not only in size, but also in character. From the new generation "Thatcher's child" officers to the extremely ambitious, and competent, breed of women soldiers, he voices the feelings of those who are caught in the clutches of redundant custom, where "ambition is, quite simply, incompatible with regimental values". It's no wonder, therefore, that talented officers are tempted away after short service.

After a detailed inspection of the combat arms and their supporting services, including the specials, the SAS and the Honourable Artillery Company, he provides a thoughtful exposition of the army's role in Northern Ireland. Whatever the restrictions there may be, Northern Ireland still provides the army with its only guaranteed testing area and, more often than not, young soldiers are keen to go there.

He does not go so far as to suggest that that is a reason for prolonging the Troubles, but he does acknowledge that Northern Ireland is the only place where soldiers do not have inflicted upon them "the time-wasting trivia of a peacetime army". He also points out, quite correctly, that the conduct of our troops, with a few notable exceptions, has been admirable: "It is hard to imagine other armies maintaining a similar degree of discipline and restraint in the face of such provocation."

Things abroad are changing too. In 1993 Gibraltar ceases to be garrisoned by British troops and after 1997 there will no longer be the plum posting of Hong Kong. With only Cyprus, Belize and possibly Borneo left as sunshine posts, the opportunities to travel to exotic-sounding places diminish in direct proportion to Britain's interests and influence outside Europe.

So it looks as if the boys (and girls) are coming home. An army needs the sort of positive threat the Soviet Union provided for so many years, and the British army no longer has one. The message from Antony Beevor is simple: adapt or die. I should know; after 16 years in the infantry I have just thrown my rattle out of the pram.

Triumph of the will

WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL TIMES
Elfriede Jelinek (translated by Michael Hulse)
Serpent's Tail £7.99

Carole Morin

My husband gave up guilt for Lent. He says guilt, like masochism, can be a subtle pleasure. And S & M is now in fashion the way bisexuality was in the early eighties.

Elfriede Jelinek wrote *Wonderful, Wonderful Times* before she perfected her unique voice, which combines the immediacy of the first person and the detachment of the third, in the brilliant *Piano Teacher*. Her publisher is not doing her any favour in failing to mention that this is not a new book. While it is undeniably powerful, it lacks the beauty and wit of the later book, and the echoes of last year's masterpiece make it disappointing: like the unavoidable dismay you might feel admiring the Sistine Chapel fresco after witnessing the Resurrection.

Every character in this book is grotesque. They are all masochists, sadists, or both: designed to bring out the sado-masochistic Nazi in all of us. The lurid lives of individuals full of bitterness, failure, weakness and hatred are an obvious metaphor for bourgeois Austria's Nazi past and (possible) neo-Nazi future. Jelinek's fear of decay, decline and death, is described in a simultaneously brutal and subtle poetic flow.

Her concern with Taikyoku, the great emptiness, is shown through consistently revolting characters uncompromisingly presented without any appeal or hidden charm. The four teenagers, who relieve their insecurity and sexual tensions by beating random victims senseless, are the Nazis. Their mothers "swaddled in the human tea-cosy of the murdered, the hanged, the gassed" are the Jews. The father of the violent teenage twins is an ex-SS officer with one leg who takes degrading pictures of his decaying wife's genitalia and rapes her on the dirty kitchen floor, then beats her with his crutch.

This is one vision of an endless march in unforgettable images: the father masturbating in his car while being driven home by his son; the worker Hans "spitting a thick gobbet of phlegm" into his broken mother's soup; the speechless anorexic female twin Anna shrinking from a maternal embrace while practising piano.

Her brother Rainer, the self-proclaimed gang-leader—a nihilist existentialist ex-altar boy virgin who writes down boasts to say in school—believes in the triumph of his will. Jelinek's ironic striptease scorns the notion that "you can create your own light if none is available."

Nevertheless, the ecstatic violence of the final scene challenges any celluloid holocaust and *Wonderful, Wonderful Times* is a flawed triumph.

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Carry on nursing

Nurses could find their status rising as a result of labour shortages and demographic change

Virginia Beardshaw

Earlier this month Graham Pink, a charge nurse responsible for the night shift on a geriatric ward in a Stockport hospital, was suspended for alleged breaches of confidentiality and an error in drug administration. This disciplinary action occurred after more than a year of concerted pressure from Mr Pink for improved staffing on his ward, which cares for very frail, acutely ill people. In June, the *Guardian* published extracts from some of his 90-odd letters of complaint to Stockport Health Authority and other health authorities describing the poor conditions. (A subsequent analysis of patient dependency levels by an independent expert using a Department of Health approved assessment system suggested that the night shift on his ward was even more inadequately staffed than he claimed.) Thereafter, Mr Pink's case attracted a great deal of national attention.

Mr Pink appears to be a classic whistleblower and, on the face of it, Stockport Health Authority appears to be guilty of the equally classic "shoot the messenger" response to unwelcome news from the frontline. But the issues raised by the Pink affair go beyond whistleblowing *per se*, and throw some interesting light on some key issues for British nursing in the future.

Nurses are responsible for the majority of professional health care given in Britain. More than half of all NHS staff are nurses, with nearly a quarter of all health service expenditure directed at nursing. Three pence in every pound of public expenditure goes to pay for nurses.

Given this, it is surprising that nursing practice, its organisation, management and future direction have been little discussed by policy makers outside nursing, despite the direct relevance of these subjects to the shape, quality and cost of health care as a whole. In an important sense, nursing issues have been marginal to the debates that have shaped British health care since 1948. Nurses, as a whole, have frequently found themselves in the position of Graham Pink: penalised for, or actively barred from, influencing the development of health care. At the same time, they routinely collect plaudits from the popular press as the overworked, underpaid "angels" of the NHS.

This is about to change. The probable scale of nursing recruitment and the retention difficulties of the next decade mean that the cost of nursing care will rise sharply. In Britain, as in the rest of the developed world, demographic changes mean an ageing population where more and more people experience chronic, disabling illnesses or conditions which require rehabilitation or palliative care at home. At the same time, new medical technologies contribute to greater opportunities for curative interventions. Throughout the last decade, these same factors have combined both to increase health costs and to inspire efforts to contain them by western governments of all political persuasions.

All this means that nurses, and those who manage them, are having to face a new set of questions about the way that care is financed, organised, and delivered. As a result, current concerns about nursing shortages should be a starting point for a wider discussion about how nursing relates to the changing context of health policy. Inevitably, a submerged tension between "quality of care" considerations and pressures for cost containment will underlie this debate, and surface in cases like that of Graham Pink.

Nursing has always been largely women's work. For many, career prospects and training are poor

These questions are directly related to the future deployment of women in the national workforce. Nursing has always been largely women's work, and the development of nursing has paralleled the emancipation of women since the mid-19th century. Today, as in the past, the majority of nurses are women. For many—particularly part-timers and unqualified staff—terms and conditions of service, career prospects and training are poor.

For these and other reasons, nurses have traditionally felt undervalued. Their pay has compared poorly with male-dominated occupational groupings, and their influence on health policy has been weak. Another intriguing question for nursing's future development is whether—as competition for labour sharpens during the 1990s, and women's expectations about what work should offer increase—nursing will finally "come of age" as an occupation, and be able to offer those who enter it improved pay, career prospects and conditions, along with a more influential voice in service management and health policy.

This is certainly one of the intentions of the reformist strategy for nursing which has been such a noticeable feature of the 1980s. Two key elements of it—the current "Project 2000" reforms to training, which are designed to create confident independent practitioners, and the introduction in 1988 of a career structure for nurses who remain at the bedside—are also clearly about equipping nurses to deal with twin challenges. First is the increasing technological sophistication of acute health care, and second the need to devise more humane and individually centred approaches to health problems of all types.

But the present current of nursing reform may run counter to the general tide of health cost control and the efficient use of labour associated with it. Nursing skill levels, competence and costs are coming under increasing scrutiny—and nurses, along with health professionals of all kinds, are having to face up to vigorous questioning of their special status. Coupled with acute nursing shortages, this could lead to changes in the 1990s.

In parts of the United States, where nursing shortages are already acute, qualified nurses' wages have increased dramatically. At the same time, technicians and semi-skilled staff have taken over a number of tasks formerly undertaken by nurses. In the light of this, last month's report from the NHS management executive's value-for-money unit suggesting that outpatient departments' use of trained nurses should be drastically curtailed looks like more than a straw in the wind.

The management of nursing as a scarce and costly resource will mean that discussion about nursing work, and its future direction, will be open to new influences and different constituencies. Wider understanding of nursing policy and practice, and the forces which shape it, will be needed if this debate is to be productive. So will a change in management style that will protect future Graham Pinks from victimisation for speaking out on patients' behalf.

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VOLUNTEER NOTICE BOARD is a free service provided by New Statesman & Society with financial assistance from Thames Television's Help programme. Interested organisations are invited to send their copy (approximately 45 words) to Dawn King at New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ by Friday preceding publication date. Please note this service is for recruiting volunteers only. If you have salaried vacancies contact the Classified Department on 071-739-1645.

INDEPENDENT Living Alternatives promotes independence for people disabled. At present we urgently need women who can drive. Helpers provide physical support in return for free board and lodgings plus £40 per week. If you want to become part of a progressive London based community initiative, contact us at: Independent Living Alternatives, Fulton Hse, Fulton Rd, Empire Way, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 OTF. 081 902 8998 ext 270.

BUILD A RELATIONSHIP and watch it grow. Some children have no-one else who really listens to them. Some have little contact with a positive male figure. Join our volunteer group, men & women, and get to know one of these children. If you are interested, live within reach of Islington, and have 2/3 hours a week to spare, contact Span on 071 250 1223.

ADFAM National Helpline for the families and friends of drug users needs volunteers to provide information & support to callers. Full training given. Expenses provided. Helpline is open 10 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday - close to South Kensington tube. Please call Anne on 071 823 9313 for further details.

LEWISHAM Befrienders would like to hear from local people who could give a few hours each week to help youngsters whose only other contact with adults may be remote figures in authority. All interested contact Leonard Davis Co-ordinator, Lewisham Befrienders, London SE8 4AU. Tel: (081) 692-0236.

SOUTH WEST SURREY - local volunteers wanted for HELP-LINE being launched for carers of people with mental health problems. Volunteers work from home, must have a phone and preferably experience of caring. Contact Margaret, Guildford (0483) 578269 for further details. The number given on 10th August was incorrect, sorry. Helpline, not yet fully operational, is (0483) 38936.

CHESTER AID for the Homeless requires f/time volunteer project workers to work with homeless men in Chester. Chester Aid for the Homeless has vacancies for residential volunteers in all 3 projects: an emergency hostel, night shelter and long stay resettlement centre. All volunteers receive £25 p/w + board & lodgings. For further details please contact Sally Gear on 0244 318360 or write: Roodee House, 22 Grosvenor Street, Chester CH1 2DD.

VOLUNTEER REGIONAL Co-ordinators Sept/Oct. An unusual opportunity for an executive to make a significant contribution to the welfare of blind people in the UK. A person, possibly early retired, with senior management experience and able to act on own initiative. About 10 hrs p/w for 16 months, administering an appeal and committee based on home locality. Most counties needed. All expenses reimbursed. CV and phone no. to: Michael Holden, Talking Newspaper, 90 High Street, Heathfield TN21 8JD.

FULL TIME FEMALE helpers needed for young disabled woman to live independently in the south west London area. No experience needed, just enthusiasm, a sense of humour and a willingness to learn how to lift. The helper would need to be between 5'4" & 5'8" and weighing not less than nine and a half stones (this is to make lifting easier). Free accommodation with all gas and electricity bills paid and an allowance of £44 p/w. For more details please call Maureen on 071 736 6941.

THAMES HELP

Thames Help, presented by Jackie Spreckley, is a four minute local social action programme. It appears four times a week on Thames Televison at 5.55 approximately (check TV Times for details). Here is a summary of this week's programmes.

This week THAMES HELP looks at the ever-present need for more kidney donors, particularly as the number of people waiting for a kidney transplant is increasing. In the meantime their kidney function is maintained by dialysis.

Monday 3rd September – Thomas - at Home

Thomas Curley is 20 months old and for nineteen of these months he has been on dialysis. Tonight we visit Thomas and his mother Grace at home and discover how being a kidney patient affects his life.

Tuesday 4th September

Tonight we join Thomas for one of his regular appointments for dialysis at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children, and find out about his urgent need for a new kidney.

Wednesday 5th September – Vandana's Story

Vandana Sharma is back on the waiting list for a new kidney, as in April this year her body rejected a transplanted kidney she received 10 years ago. She is also back on a form of dialysis which she is able to do at home without supervision.

Thursday 6th September – Paula's Story

Paula Evans was surprised when in November 1988, she was diagnosed with renal failure and had to begin dialysis. Paula hadn't associated her symptoms with a possible kidney problem. Fortunately for Paula, just a year after her diagnosis she received a kidney transplant and is able to lead a full and active life once more.

Our phone lines will be open after each programme for viewers to call in for a donor card and information about transplants. The number to ring is 071-388 8282.

The regular Monday lunchtime edition of THAMES HELP not only previews the weeks programmes but also has regular features of its own including a COMMUNITY ACTION SLOT and a VOLUNTEER NOTICEBOARD compiled in conjunction with this page.

THAMES TELEVISION

Thames Help, Thames Television PLC, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL. Telephone: 01-387 9494.

ARE YOU LOOKING for sales, delivery or driving experience? Would you help people choose the furniture they need or perhaps help us to deliver it? Homestore (based in Bow, Tower Hamlets) helps people unable to purchase basic household goods by collecting and distributing donated items. We need two more helpers. Expenses paid. Call Mike Jenn of the BIA on 071-250 1193.

FEMALE COMEDY WRITER with M.E. needs female live-in volunteer general assistant/driver. Age 18-30. No special skills or experience required but competent driving, energy, and flexibility important. Interest in sport and/or outdoor pursuits an advantage. Accommodation plus £39 per week. Min two months. Contact Ann Fletcher, Buckden Towers, Buckden, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE18 9TH.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED. We are developing a new initiative in outreach work with college based young people. We need an enthusiastic volunteer who has experience in counselling and youth work, to assist the Student Services Advisor in developing this innovative project. Time involved - 1 day p/w during term time. Expenses paid. Journey 35 mins from London. Contact: Sasha at Open Door, 35 Brooke Road, Grays, Essex. Tel: 0375 378678.

THE PARKINSON'S DISEASE Society, through its local branches seeks to help sufferers with the problems arising from the affliction and to provide funding for medical research to find a cure for the disease. Our branches need volunteers to help in this vital work. Contact Rodney Wolfe Coe 081-852 4337

UNITED NATIONS Association is seeking enthusiastic volunteers to help out with general campaigning work in its rapidly expanding Youth and Student Dept. Please telephone Tony Samphier on 071 930 2932 for further details.

TO THE LIGHTHOUSE – sponsored cycle ride for AIDS charities needs volunteers for Sunday September 9th. Please call Susie or Donna on 071-737 7273 from 11 am to 7 pm.

WESTMINSTER Carers Service. We offer respite care in the home to relieve carers for a few hours a week. Do you have any spare time? We need reliable, responsible and caring people who would enjoy being with an elderly or disabled person enabling their carer to have a break. Please contact Sarah or David on 976 5999 or write to W.C.S., St James the Less Centre, Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2PT.

LIVERPOOL Personal Service Society. The Home Service offers volunteer support to people facing a terminal illness at home, their partners and families. We are now recruiting volunteers who are able to offer time to provide a flexible support service. The role includes befriending and sharing interests & time with the ill person, being available to listen & talk to all concerned, providing respite for the main carer, accompanying to hospital and supporting partners & families in the early stages of bereavement. Drivers are especially welcome. Expenses are payable. Contact Gillian Moore on 051-236 5255. For information on other volunteer and community projects tel. Mary Bold on 051-236 5255.

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Correspondence should be addressed to
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Foundation House, Perseverance Works,
38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ
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Appointments

TURNING POINT
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM DRUGLINK

Hammersmith & Fulham Druglink is an innovative street agency offering a variety of services to drug users, their families and friends. The project currently operates an outreach team, needle exchange, primary health-care service as well as advice, counselling and referral. The project has a special emphasis on HIV/AIDS work both in prevention and support of those who are already HIV+.

PROJECT MANAGER
Salary: £17,271 - £18,993 incl.

We are seeking a project manager to co-ordinate the various services and maintain professional standards. In particular the postholder would be responsible for staff supervision, in-service training, contact with local statutory and voluntary bodies and monitoring and development of the project's services. A background in social work or youth and community work and the ability to manage, organise and co-ordinate service delivery are essential. Knowledge of the drugs field and relevant professional qualifications would be advantageous.

BLACK OUTREACH WORKER
Salary: £14,067 - £14,898 incl.

This post is part of the outreach team at Hammersmith & Fulham Druglink and has a particular emphasis on working in the local black community. The postholder will be expected to have a non-judgemental attitude to both drug users and those with HIV/AIDS, as well as an ability to relate to a wide variety of people. We are looking for a black person with either experience or an interest in a community based approach to drugs work and relevant qualifications or skills would be an advantage.

This post is advertised in accordance with section 5 (2) (d) of the Race Relations Act.

Closing date: 7th September 1990.

Turning Point is striving towards equal opportunities and therefore welcomes applications from all sectors of the community.

For a job description and application form, please telephone 071-606-3947 or write to Turning Point, CAP House, 9/12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA.

TURNING POINT 25 YEARS

Turning Point is the largest National Charity helping people with drink, drug and mental health problems.

New Statesman & Society Classified Advertising

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NEWSTATESMAN
SOCIETY

DISPLAY SALES EXECUTIVE

The NEW STATESMAN & SOCIETY magazine has a vacancy for a display sales executive. The successful applicant will be familiar with the editorial profile of the magazine, and will have a particular interest in the arts.

The job involves presenting to major advertising agencies and clients direct, as well as telephone selling, and calls for intelligence, imagination and determination. Applicants lacking a classic sales CV but demonstrating the above qualities will be considered.

Benefits include a competitive salary, a realistic bonus scheme and six weeks annual holiday.

Call Jenny Shramenko on 071 739 1645.

NEW STATESMAN & SOCIETY
Foundation House, Perseverance Works,
38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ.

Wanted for work in Bolivia *Latin America*

A Documentalist is required to work for a local Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) - an alternative media institute in La Paz, the capital of Bolivia. The organisation promotes better communication and information between community groups and acts as a resource centre. Applications are invited from people with training/expertise in documentation, a knowledge of comuterised systems and a flexible approach. Proficiency in Spanish is necessary. Training given if required.

As a UNAIS Project Worker, you will work with local organisations who strive to support local communities aiming to get a fairer share of resources. Your work will be with local people who have initiated the project, who bring it to fruition, whose lives are changed by it.

Conditions of Work

* Minimum 2 year contract * Reasonable living allowance *
* Accommodation * NI and Medical Insurance *
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* flights * Various grants *

For further details and an application form, send an A4 s.a.e. to:
The Recruitment Co-ordinator, UNAIS,
Suite 3a, Hunter Hse, 57 Goodramgate,
YORK YO1 2LS. Tel: 0904 647799

UNA-UK UNAIS

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Grampian
REGIONAL COUNCIL
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AUTHORITY

Application forms from Director of Personnel Services, Woodhill House, Aberdeen AB9 2LU. Tel 0224-664110 (24-hour service). Closing date 7th September.

SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER

Re-advertisement. Ref 1099/90CC. Salary £15,102-£18,318

An opportunity exists in our Peterhead Area Office to lead a team of professional staff including social workers, OT's and home help supervisors in spearheading the implementation of good quality community care for elderly and disabled people. Applicants should have a CQSW or recognised equivalent and at least four years post-qualifying experience.

Based in Banff/Buchan division, an area of great natural beauty which has something for everyone. Educational provision is first class and includes a college of further education. Aberdeen, with its major road, rail, sea and air networks, is just a comfortable hours drive away. House prices are reasonable and vary in choice from town house flats to crofts. As a progressive employer we offer a first class employment and relocation package. There is a commitment to provide professional support, supervision and training. Assistance with local authority housing may be available. Informal enquiries to Colin Mackenzie, Divisional Officer or Alistair Macphail, Social Work Manager, Tel 02612-2001.

SOCIAL WORKER
(Fostering & Adoption)

Re-advertisement. Ref 1100/90CC. Salary £11,577-£15,102

Required to join a new developing divisional team for fostering and adoption based in Peterhead.

Responsibilities will include recruiting families to care for children, assessing and preparing applicants and supporting carers. The work will be challenging but offers the chance to shape and develop our services to children. Candidates should have real commitment to improving the range and quality of care provided for children. They should have a min of two years, post qualification, experience in the field of child care with a good understanding of the fundamentals of this area of work.

Applicants with energy, enthusiasm and sensitivity, a social work qualification and current driving licence can ring Sue Hough at Banff 02612-2001 for an informal discussion.

SENIOR DAY CENTRE OFFICER

Ref 1096/90CC. Salary £13,614-£15,102.

Required at Park House Centre, Aberdeen which provides a needs-led service to 71 adults with learning difficulties. The Staff Team are committed to developing locally based services, promoting integration and the use of community resources.

We require an enthusiastic person to join us. If *YOU* have — a relevant social work qualification, CQSW, DTMHA, CSS, OT, etc; experience in working with adults with learning difficulties; have the ability to promote staff development; are committed to the principles of normalisation and self-advocacy for clients; are innovative. Then *THIS* post would offer you an opportunity to develop your management skills and play a key role in future developments for this client group. Informal enquiries to Mrs *Moyra Logan, Officer-in-Charge or Mr Glyn Edwards*, Depute Officer-in-Charge, Tel 0224-645822.

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REGIONAL DIRECTOR

NORTH WEST ENGLAND

Salary P.O.5 — (£21,447 — £22,989)

MacIntyre is a voluntary organisation. It provides residential, daycare and occupational resources in England and Wales dedicated to enabling children and adults who have a mental disability to overcome the factors which handicap them.

Currently the North West region comprises two projects in Warrington and Chester, there are nine units with 91 staff serving a total of 58 people.

The Regional Director will be based in Chester, to direct the work of existing projects and to be instrumental in developing other innovative services within the region which has the potential for further growth and development. The person appointed will play an important role as a member of the Management Board of MacIntyre and will need to be a good communicator, administrator and decision maker with experience of project development. We are looking for someone who has enjoyed senior management, in an organisation concerned with the welfare of disadvantaged people, and whose attributes include creativity, sensitivity, dynamism, initiative and a sense of humour.

MacIntyre has an optional Pension Scheme and a company car is provided.

Holidays: 30 working days plus 8 statutory and 2 concessionary days.

MacIntyre is an equal opportunity employer.

For further information and application form contact: **E. M. Turner, Personnel Director, MacIntyre, No 2 Ridgeway Court, Grovebury Road, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 8SW. Telephone: (0525) 370102.**

Closing date for applications: September 11, 1990.

Shortlising week beginning 17 September, 1990.

Interviews: 9 and 10 October, 1990.

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to undertake outreach and developmental work with young women in Hackney and Clapton

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Job descriptions (please specify) and application forms are available from the Homertón Youth Project, 45/49 Chelmer Rd., LONDON E9 6AY.

Section 7(2)e of the Sex Descrimination Act 1975 applies

SOVA

SOUTHERN REGIONAL MANAGER

Starting salary £14,199 to £14,602 incl ILW

SOVA is a national charity which seeks to promote community involvement with ex-offenders and their families.

The Regional Manager will manage new and established projects in the South of England. He or she will be responsible for projects based in Berkshire, West Sussex and Kent — working in partnership with local Probation Services. The post will be based in Brixton although extensive travel is required.

For further information and application form, please contact Janet Bleach, Director South and West, SOVA, 1-4 Brixton Hill Place, London SW2 1HJ, telephone 081-671 7833. Closing date for applications: September 10, 1990.

SOVA aims to promote Equal Opportunities as an employer and provider of services

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR CHILD STUDIES

YOUTHSCAN

A **RESEARCH OFFICER** is required from September 1, 1990 (or as soon after as possible) to work on a two-year ALBSU/Paul Hamlyn Foundation-funded research project to investigate the extent of Literacy problems in Children and Young Adults in a National Study directed by Professor Neville Butler.

Candidates should have previous research experience and be familiar with questionnaire and statistical analysis techniques. Familiarity with practices in Adult Basic Education would be an advantage but is not essential.

Salary will be according to age and experience with a max of £16,000.

Further details and an application form are obtainable from:

Miss Jenny Cobb,
International Centre for Child Studies
Ashley Down House,
16 Cotham Park,
Bristol BS6 6BU.

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ENDGAMES

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 3040 Set by P S Burton and Ms de Meaner
New endings to famous tragedies or comedies.

Report by Ms de Meaner
Yes, I know this competition is an old favourite. But if anyone *ever* again sends in a one-line ending for *Waiting for Godot*, which reads "Godot, you've arrived", I shall explode. You have all been warned! John Marriott took the easy way out for *Othello*, with instructions like: "Interrupt Act V, Scene II at line 80... at which point Emilia bursts in. Thereafter, with a few omissions, additions and emendations, much of the present text can be retained. Emilia's argument with Othello, and subsequently with Iago, can subsequently be played as comedy." No doubt, John, but we sceptics in the comp complex require *proof*. I congratulate Watson Weeks on his first line, a stage direction: *The asp bites Cleopatra and dies*. But after that it went downhill fast. Most of you opted for *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Martin Fagg's *Earnest* nearly made the grade, but I thought of you out there, my darlings, and kept them down to two. £12 for the winners and no extras!

Could whoever sent in the *Othello*, please write again enclosing your name and address. You'll be asking me to wipe your bottoms next!

The Importance of Being Earnest
Lady Bracknell: A handbag!
Miss Prism: The very one I deposited at Victoria Station.
Lady B: And what, pray, does it contain now?
Miss P: Nothing, so far as I know.
Rev. Chasuble: This is where you are wrong. Allow me to explain. I have just learned some terrible news about these two gentlemen. Algernon and Jack (or Ernest, as he now claims to be). It appears that they have been mutually indulging in—how shall I put it?—the love that dare not speak its name. The shame of it. They have brought disgrace upon us all.
Algernon: Ernest: *(together)* I — we —
Rev. C: Silence! Remember Sodom and Gomorrah.
Lady B: I have no wish to be turned into a pillar of salt.
Rev. C: I respect your wishes, Lady Bracknell, and have devised an alternative. I have placed five pounds of explosive in that handbag, with a time-fuse. It is just about to go off.
Lady B: I am told that in comedy, timing is all.
Rev. C: It is the same in tragedy. Farewell for ever! *Exit!*
A violent explosion, which incinerates all present.

Stanley J Sharpless

Death of a Salesman
There is the sound of a car moving away at full speed
Linda: No!
Biff: *(rushing down the stairs)* Pop!
As the car speeds off, the music builds into a serenade of trumpets, trombones etc, playing a raggedy jazz tune. Re-enter Willy, with Uncle Ben.
Willy: *(his voice breaking)* Honey, I just crashed that damn Studebaker for the last time. And you know what? Slamming an automobile into a brick wall at eighty is the most fantastic experience.
Charley: Can I crash the car, Pop?
Ben: Terrific knock on the head, William.
Willy: Because I went through that windshield, and I thought, who the hell ever said selling was a career? You know?
Linda: Honey...
Willy: No, listen. I gotta terrific idea in that wreckage back there. It's a steal. We go to England...
Biff: You mean, sail the ocean blue, Pop?
Willy: Sail it? We're gonna *conquer* it! 'Cause England is a dream country, with honey and all kinds of fresh cheese. And it's begging, I tell you, for what I got in my head.
Ben: The jungle is very full of diamonds in England, William.
Willy: Sure! So we buy land, and re-create their history. Henry and Elizabeth. Julius Caesar. Steam engines. London smog.
Biff: You gotta name, Pop?
Willy: Sure! Hundred-dollar name: *Theme Parks*!
Linday: Oh Willy!
Triumphant musical crescendo.

Bill Greenwell

No 3043 Set by Ms de Meaner and Dot Matrix
Last Tuesday's editorial in a certain liberal quality daily paper started with the thought-provoking question: "Who would wish to be President of the United States at a time like this?" Continue the editorial for a further 200 words in a similarly pontificial vein, while studiously avoiding saying anything original or intelligent. To be in by 13 September.

Othello
Othello: Thou'rt sure, Iago, that she doth perform the sweet erectile act with Cassio?
Iago: Most sure, my lord.
Othello: And oft?
Iago: Every hour
Upon the hour
Othello: Heaven be prais'd! The calls
These hot Venetian whores do make upon
A man's virility exceed all bounds.
This opportune deflection of her lust
Returns me to the horny arms of that
Stern mistress whom alone I truly love,
My military craft. Since Cassio
With this priapic exercise is thus
Preoccupied, 'tis *thou*, most honest Iago
Not he, shall be my doughty deputy. (*Exit*)
Iago: Methinks this Othello is not as bad a man
As I had thought. 'Tis a pity he's a Moor
But not his fault exactly.
Enter Emilia
Emilia: You did command that should my lady drop
Some gauzy item of her garniture,
I was to bring it to you straight. I have
Her handkerchief. What shall I do with it?
Iago: Why, give it back to her. What else?
Exit Emilia
Goats and monkeys!
Women ever meddlers were and ever will be! (*Curtain*)

Unknown

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Waiting for Godot

Estragon: Didi.
Vladimir: Yes.
Est: I can't go on like this.
Vl: That's what you think.
Est: What if we parted? That might be better for us.
Vl: We'll hang ourselves tomorrow. (*Pause*) Unless Godot comes.
Est: And if he comes?
Vl: We'll be saved.

Estragon sighs

Vl: Pull up your trousers.
Est: Didi!
Vl: What?
Est: Look! Didi. Look! Up there, in the clouds.
Vl: I can't see nothing.
Est: Didi. It's *him*! Godot!
Vl: Where?
Est: That old man, with a white beard — and — look — he's — he's *beckoning*!
Vl: Probably wants us to hand over our money.
Est: We don't have any.
Vl: Precisely.
Est: Look! Didi. *Look*! Look at his *face*! Look at his *smile*. Listen! Didi, *Listen*! I can hear *angels* singing. Look, there's a stairway leading up to — up to — up to *Heaven*. Come on, Didi, come on. Godot came after all.
Vl: Oh, all right

Curtain descends, then rises to the noise of rats squeaking. Sounds of scuttling and scrabbling in the dark corners. Litter blows about the stage. A brown rat climbs on to Estragon's body.

George Cowley

The Importance of Being Earnest

Miss Prism: I have never seen this handbag before. It is a severe disappointment to me.
Lady Bracknell: Too long have I stayed silent. The bag is mine. In it I concealed a small infant, product of my guilty connection with a young curate. The bag was deposited by my maid in the cloakroom of one of our larger railway stations—I have the ticket still.
Jack: Then I am...?
Lady Bracknell: Gwendolen's sister.
Gwendolen: Anything of an incestuous nature is quite repugnant to me. I must dissolve our engagement at one.
Cecily: I have quite sufficient wickedness in my family, Mr Moncrieff. Our engagement is at an end.
Gwendolen and Cecily: (*embracing*) Sister!
Chasuble: Augusta?
Lady Bracknell: Herbert! My own! (*They embrace*)
Algernon: Dr Chasuble, are you experienced in the conduct of funerals?
Chasuble: Indeed. My sermon on the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion.
Algernon and Jack: We must be buried at once. (*Producing pocket-knives, they cut their throats*)
Miss Prism: The good end unhappily and so do the bad. That is what tragedy means.
Jack: (*with a last gasp*) Mama! My name?
Lady Bracknell: Frederick!

Lydia Shaxberd

GRAFFITI BY PAIGE

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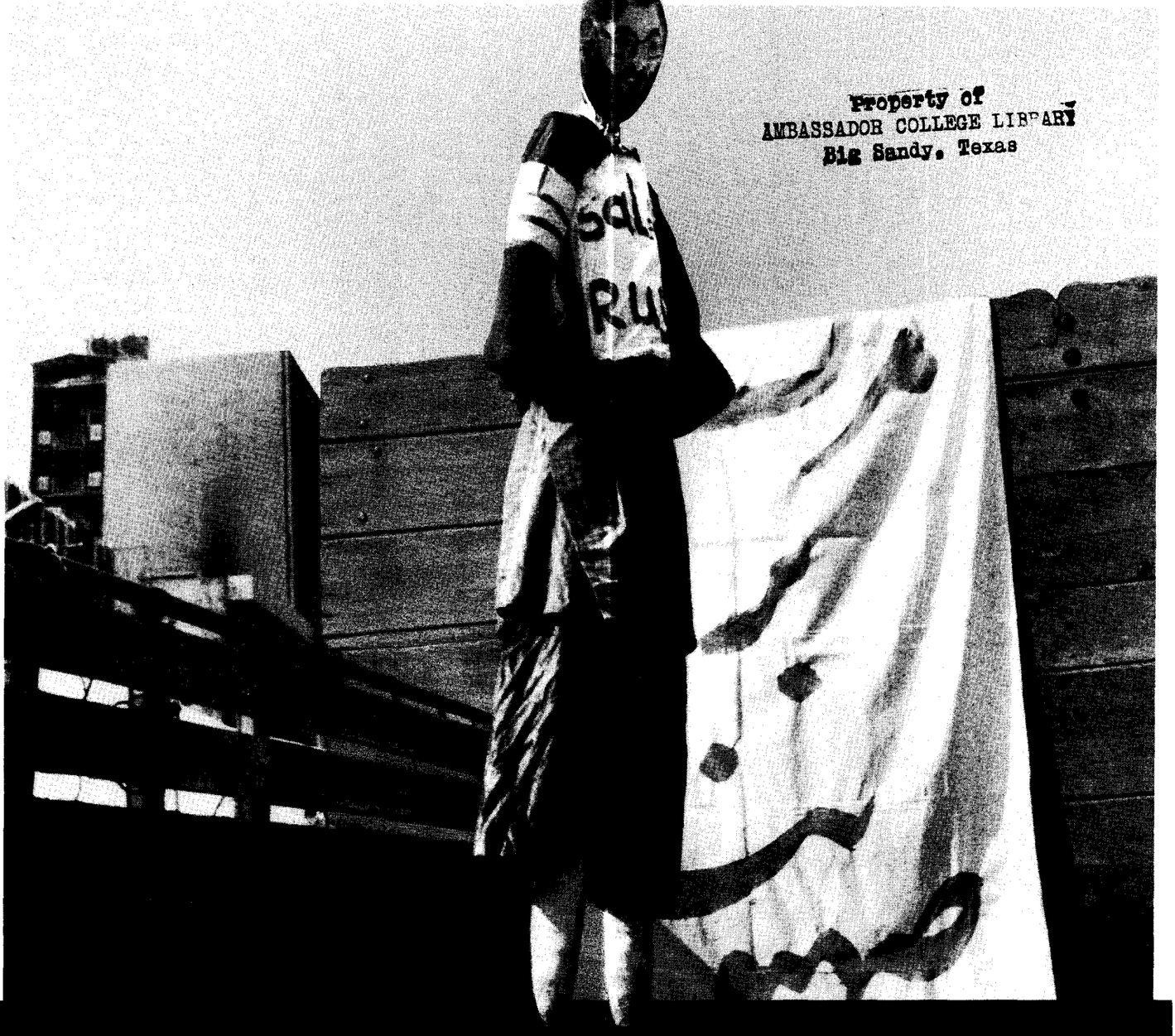

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